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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XX, Issue No. 6 | WEDNESDAY JANUARY 6, 2010 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

House overrides Fitial's veto of boat launching site bill. PAGE 3

Cheaper health insurance for Fund members eyed. PAGE 5

OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you plan to attend any of the inauguration events scheduled next week?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Tallest Yet

Dubai opened the world's tallest skyscraper Monday in a blaze of fireworks.

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Not Guilty

The suspect in last year's massacre of 57 Filipino journalists and members of a rival clan has pleaded not guilty.

ASIA...Page 15

Worst Dressed

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has been named the worst-dressed man of the year by GQ.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 21

Destructive tsunami hits Solomons

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (AP)— Earthquakes and a tsunami that slammed the Solomon Islands sent hillsides crashing down and inundated homes, but residents' memories of earlier disasters probably helped prevent any casualties, officials and residents said Tuesday.

No injuries were reported some 30 hours after the biggest in a series of quakes churned a tsunami wave that was up to 10 feet (3 meters) high as it plowed into a remote region in the nation's west on Monday.

Authorities were still trying to reach hard-hit areas on Rendova and Tetepare islands, and to account for an unknown number of people believed to have fled their villages, police commissioner Peter Marshall told The Associated Press.

Photographs taken from police helicopters Tuesday showed debris lining the foreshore and damaged houses on the coasts of

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AP

In this image provided by the Solomon Island's Police, a scene shows the aftermath of a tsunami on the island of Rendova, Solomon Islands, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010.

OAG: King need not suspend practice of law

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General issued an opinion yesterday that the newly elected chairperson of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents, Janet King, is not required to suspend her law practice just so she could serve on the board.

King said yesterday that she was elated by the Attor-

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Rota poachers attack fruit bat colony

The Division of Fish and Wildlife has discovered another incident of illegal hunting at another Mariana fruit bat maternity colony on Rota.

In a statement issued yesterday, the division said the poaching incident was discovered during the course of routine bird surveys on the morning of Dec. 24, 2009.

"[About] 25 to 50 fruit bats were witnessed flying overhead. Fruit bats are generally only active at night unless disturbed. Division of Fish and Wildlife biologists conducted a survey of a nearby roost site and found fresh footprints, shotgun shells, and a fresh fruit bat carcass riddled with shotgun pellets, but no live fruit bats remained," DFW said.

At least 222 adults and 26 juvenile fruit bats were known to inhabit this roost before the poaching incident.

This is the sixth poaching event at a fruit bat colony on Rota in the last year and a half;

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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

From left, Ruth L. Tighe, her daughter Stacey Tighe, Gloria Hunter and Donna Cruz right after the 16th House of Representatives presented Ruth L. Tighe with a resolution commending her outstanding contributions to the CNMI as a professional librarian, writer, educator and citizen, and for her many years of service to the greater good of the community, during a session on Capital Hill yesterday afternoon.

House honors Ruth L. Tighe

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The 16th House of Representatives adopted a resolution yesterday commending Ruth L. Tighe for her outstanding contributions to the CNMI as a professional librarian, writer, educator, and citizen.

Tighe personally accepted a copy of House Resolution 16-104 during the House session yesterday morning.

Accompanying Tighe were her daughter Stacey and friends Gloria Hunter and Donna Cruz, among others.

"[I'm] humbled and greatly honored," Tighe told *Saipan Tribune*.

Only Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) didn't sign the

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Local

'MPLT may have violated Constitution'

When it remitted $4.1M to general fund

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Marianas Public Lands Trust may have violated Article XI, section 6(d) of the CNMI Constitution when it transferred $4.1 million in withheld interest income to the general fund because such withheld interest income was not distributable income, but principal.

This was the conclusion by House Legal Counsel Joey P. San Nicolas, who was asked by House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan) for a legal opinion on the constitutionality of MPLT's transfer of the $4.1 million to the general fund.

"This is very serious," House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) said in yesterday's session of the 16th House of Representatives before adjourning Sine Die.

Palacios expressed hope that current members who will be on the 17th Legislature will pursue the matter further.

He also asked Yumul, who got re-elected, to ask for a copy of any recordings or document showing the legal guidance received by MPLT in making a decision to transfer the $4.1 million to the general fund.

MPLT vice chair Alvaro Santos, when asked for comment, said the MPLT board of trustees has a protocol of referring all media inquiries to MPLT chair Phillip Mendiola-Long. Mendiola-Long, however, did not return calls for comment.

MPLT counsel Robert Torres also declined to comment, referring media inquiries to the MPLT trustees.

Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider (R-Saipan) said MPLT should disclose its annual interest income, which he said could be well over $1.5 million yearly.

Senate President Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan) also watched the House proceedings yesterday, with the same question on the constitutionality of MPLT's move to transfer the amount.

The Senate confirmed on Dec. 30 the re-appointment to the MPLT board of trustees Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero, who told senators that MPLT had already remitted the controversial $4.1 million in interest income to the general fund for appropriation in Fiscal Year 2009.

While the $4.1 million was a resource listed for appropriation in Public Law 16-32 or the FY 2009 budget and House Concurrent Resolutions 16-2 and 16-3, MPLT made no transfer of funds before the end of the fiscal year.

As early as June, Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Frica Pangelinan (D-Saipan) already warned that the government is expected to have an additional $4.1 million deficit in FY 2009 if MPLT does not transfer to the general fund the resource listed as "recovered interest."

In late October, MPLT voted to remit the amount, but it wasn't until weeks later that the actual remittance was made.

Article XI, section 6(d) of the CNMI Constitution provides that MPLT trustees shall "transfer to the general revenues of the Commonwealth the remaining interest accrued on the trust proceeds" less reasonable expenses of administration.

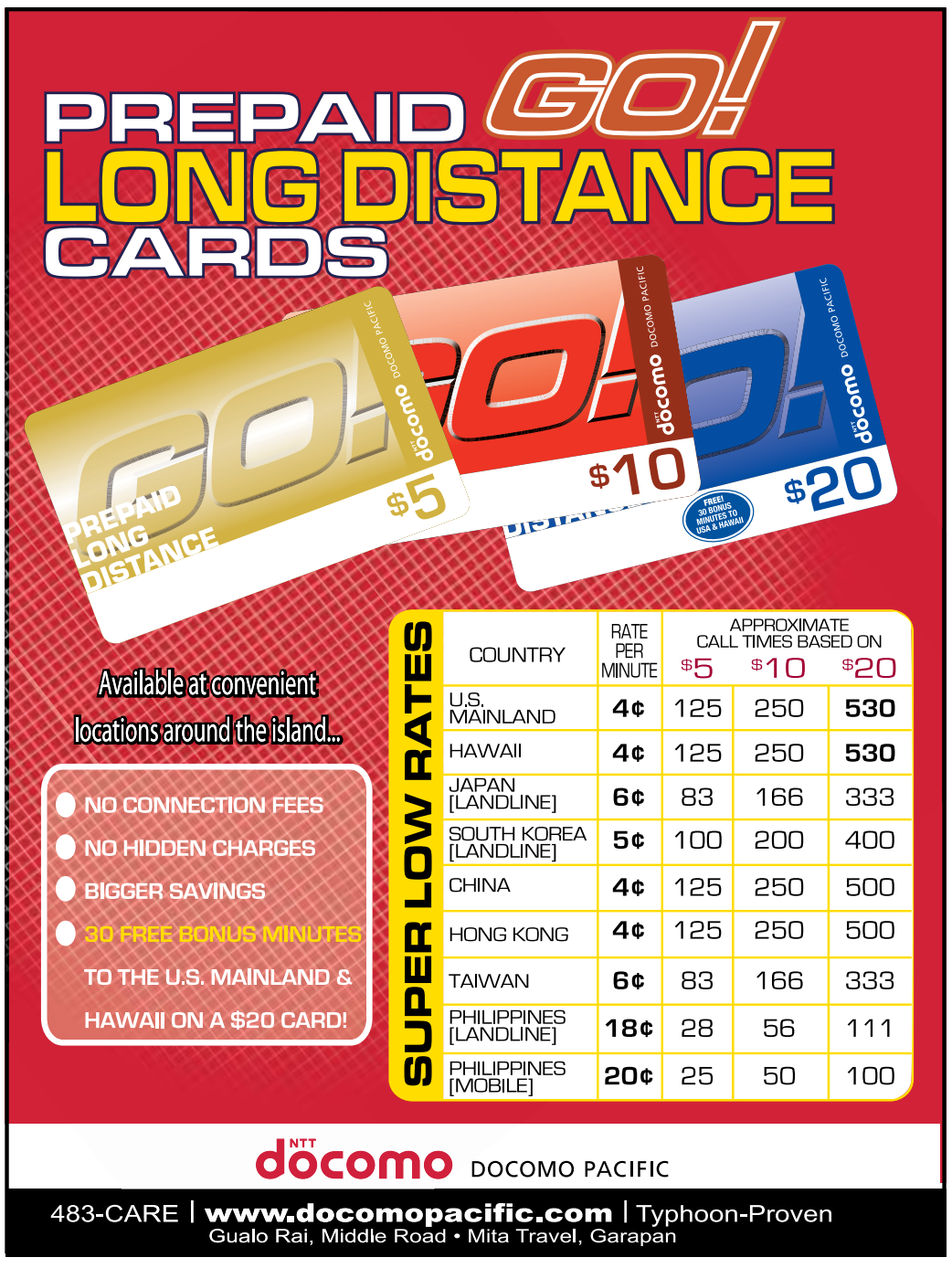
"Thus, it is clear that interest income derived from MPLT investments must be transferred to the general fund for appropriation. However, under P.L. 10-29 a certain portion of interest income was to be transferred by MPLT to a now defunct special trust fund as 'an addition to principal'," San Nicolas said in his Jan. 1, 2010 memorandum to Yumul's committee.

The House legal counsel said if withheld interest income was converted to principal via Public Laws 10-29 and 12-27, then MPLT is constitutionally prohibited from transferring any withheld interest income pursuant to those laws since MPLT can only transfer interest income to the general fund, not principal.

San Nicolas also cited an Oct. 28, 2009 letter by MPLT acting chair Alvaro Santos to Yumul, stating that MPLT was legally prohibited from transferring any interest income withheld until the Legislature repealed Public Laws 10-29 and 12-27, which reclassified withheld interest income as principal.

CAREER EXPLORATION HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Hopwood Junior High School students mingle with visiting U.S. Navy divers aboard the USNS Safeguard, which they toured yesterday morning as part of the school's career exploration program. 17 divers from the U.S. Navy's Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1 Company 1-7 out of San Diego, California, along with personnel from the USNS Safeguard, have so far removed some 15 tons of "dangers to navigation" like corals and rock formations from the Saipan channel.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Job Announcement

Zoning Enforcement Officer

COMMONWEALTH ZONING BOARD

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Zoning Enforcement Officer. This is a full-time position on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Duties and Responsibilities: Conduct and supervise field surveys to inspect for, and verify compliance with, the Zoning Law and to collect land use information as instructed by the Zoning Administrator. Supervise and prepare notices of violation and other compliance documents for approval by the Zoning Administrator. Coordinate the field enforcement activities of the Zoning Officers, including serving violation notices, setting schedules, the design and implementation of information gathering procedures, and written follow-up. Manage all aspects of issuing, tracking, and processing zoning violation notices, including conducting pre- and post-notice consultations, reviewing for compliance, tracking timelines and public notice requirements, coordinating interagency consultations, and prepare written recommendations and reports. Maintain and publish zoning violation fine guidelines and schedules as approved by the Board and Zoning Administrator. Assure consistent and justifiable imposition of fines and enforcement actions. Seek legal advice as directed by the Zoning Administrator and coordinate enforcement notice procedures, fine imposition, and abatement actions with legal counsel and provide weekly written status reports to the Zoning Administrator. Gather, research and coordinate property leasing and ownership information with government agencies. Coordinate efforts and procedures for unsafe and derelict building violation enforcement and abatement with the Dept.of Public Works, Dept. of Public Safety and Dept. of Public Health. Performs other related duties as assigned.

Minimum Requirements: a Bachelor's Degree either in engineering, architecture, urban planning, environmental science, geography, economics, political science, natural science, business administration, or related field, plus a minimum of 3 years of progressive experience in any combination of land use planning, zoning, construction management, business administration, public health, environmental management, public policy, natural resource management, land management, regulatory and permitting enforcement or related field. The salary range is from $36,000 to $40,000, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Health, life and retirement benefits are provided. Information about the Zoning Board and the Zoning Office may be viewed at the Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp. Application submittals should be addressed to Victor Barrett, Zoning Administrator. Submittals may be sent via e-mail, FAX, U.S. mail, or hand delivered to the address below. Submittals must include a letter of interest, a CNMI Application For Employment, and a resume. The Application for Employment may be downloaded from the publications page of the Zoning Board website. Applicants must be US citizens, permanent residents or immediate relatives. Send submittals to: E-mail: staff@zoning.gov.mp. FAX: 670-234-9666. US Mail: Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 USA. Hand Delivery: Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

House overrides Fitial's veto of boat launching site bill

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

In its last session yesterday before adjourning *sine die*, the 16th House of Representatives overrode Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's veto of a bill designating Lau Lau Bay as a boat launching site to facilitate quicker response times for emergencies located in the eastern coastline of Saipan.

All the 19 members present voted "yes," in favor of the override of the governor's veto of House Bill 16-219, HD1.

Only Rep. Edwin Aldan (Cov-Tinian) was absent during the voting.

Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), author of the vetoed bill, said he's "disappointed" with the reasons that the governor cited in vetoing HB 16-219, HD1.

"One of the two reasons cited for vetoing the bill is the potential for increased liability. An analogy could be made that we should not construct roads because if somebody slips, we could be held liable. Second, I don't see lack of identified resources as a compelling reason to veto it," Deleon Guerrero said.

The bill's author said "the overlying reason for the bill is to save lives."

House members, including Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz, Rep. Ed Salas (R-Saipan), Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider (R-Saipan), and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), took turns supporting the intent of Deleon Guerrero's bill.

Former Rep. Juan I. Tenorio, during the public comment period, also voiced his support for designating Lau Lau Bay as a boat launching site.

"The area is very safe for launching boats," said Tenorio, a former chairman of the Tanapag Action Group which put environmental concerns to front.

The proposed boat launching site is located adjacent to Forbidden Island, Tank Beach, and Marine Beach. The bill seeks to speed up response time for emergencies on the eastern side of Saipan.

On Dec. 14, Fitial disapproved Deleon Guerrero's bill, citing a potential for increased liability against the CNMI and lack of identified resources in the bill.

Fitial, in vetoing the bill, said the structure of the measure "has sufficient problems that it must, with reluctance, be disapproved."

Fitial added that the bill directs certain administrative actions by agencies within the Executive Branch without identifying any resources.

Retirement Fund bill

The House also passed on a 15-0 vote a bill seeking to include on the NMI Retirement Fund board of trustees a member from a chartered or incorporated organization representing CNMI retirees.

House Bill 16-254, introduced by Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan), was passed by the Senate on Dec. 17 with amendments that included a requirement that a qualified retiree organization should be one that has a membership of at least 1,000. It thus became H.B. 16-254, HD1, SS1.

Juan M. Sablan, chairman of the newly organized Commonwealth Retirement Association, spoke in support of the bill during a public comment period in the House session.

"It's good that they passed this bill. We hope the governor will sign it into law," said Sablan.

He said the Commonwealth Retirement Association currently has only about 300 registered members, but they expect to recruit more in the weeks ahead to reach at least 1,000 to represent 5,000 to 6,000 active and retired members of the NMI Retirement Fund.

Sine Die

At past 3pm, House members started delivering speeches one by one to either say goodbye to their colleagues or wishing those who will return to the 17th Legislature good luck.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) gave each member an opportunity to share their thoughts before the 16th House adjourned *sine die.*

Twelve of the 20 members of the 16th House did not seek re-election or didn't win in their re-election bid.

Meanwhile, the 16th Senate will hold its final session today before adjourning *sine die.*

The inauguration of the 17th House and Senate will be on Jan. 11, Monday, 10am, on Capital Hill.

Boating cops rescue 4 from distressed boat

Boating Safety officers rescued four persons from a fishing boat that had drifted due to an engine problem two miles west of the Hyatt Regency Saipan Sunday night.

The boat captain, Romero Del Mundo, and his crew members, Apolinario Dela Rosa, Ricar Adubal, and Gregorio Din, were safe, according to Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric F. David.

David said the officers found the boat in compliance with local Boating Safety laws.

David said it was Din who called 911 and reported a distressed vessel Monday at 8:06pm.

At 8:56pm, Boating Safety personnel boarded a rescue vessel *Zodiac III* and spotted the boat.

The vessel was towed to Smiling Cove Marina where the officers interviewed the captain and inspected the boat.

Del Mundo stated that he and his crew left Smiling Cove Marina at 5pm and traveled north toward the main channel at the first green buoy just north of Smiling Cove.

The boat anchored inside the lagoon and the crew members started rod fishing.

As it was getting dark, the crew noticed that their boat was drifting in a southwesterly direction.

"They checked their anchor and found that it had broken off. They tried to start the boat engine, to no avail. From there, they called DPS 911 for assistance," David said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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NMI immigration officers say they may sue govt

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Now jobless, at least six long-time civil service employees of the newly-closed CNMI Division of Immigration are weighing their options that may include suing the government for leaving them in limbo.

Roman M. Tudela Jr., who serves as spokesperson of the group, said they were not given an opportunity to transfer to other local agencies or to file for retirement.

"We would like to give the government until today to answer my letter about the closing of the Immigration office. We are not asking for more. Filing a lawsuit is our last resort. We would like to settle this matter as peaceful as possible," Tudela told *Saipan Tribune* in a phone interview yesterday.

Tudela worked at the CNMI Division of Immigration for over 19 years.

He wrote a letter to Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham on Jan. 4, a few days after Buckingham issued a memorandum officially stating that the CNMI Division of Immigration has ceased operations.

The office closure came a little over a month since the federal government took over control of CNMI immigration on Nov. 28 pursuant to U.S. Public Law 110-229 or the Consolidated Natural Resources Act.

Tudela said while the attorney general's memo mentioned that the office "has finally come to a conclusion," he said he is "still in limbo on the status of my employment."

"There are about five other long-time civil service employees who were never formally informed of our future in the CNMI government after such closure of DOI," Tudela told Buckingham.

As of yesterday, Tudela has yet to receive a response from the attorney general.

"I understand times have been very challenging and we are all busy during this transition mode with federalization of CNMI immigration, but I feel I deserve the respect and the right to be addressed properly as CNMI government civil service employee," Tudela said.

He also gave a copy of his letter to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), Senate President Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan), and Personnel director Francisco S. Ada.

Acting press secretary Teresa Kim earlier said that the government has worked to get as many people as possible placed into alternate jobs.

She also noted ongoing meetings with CNMI immigration employees to discuss options within the government and options to retire, among other things.

Back in November, there were at least 34 remaining CNMI immigration officers with the division, but the governor said at the time that his administration is doing its best to transfer eligible employees to other local agencies such as the Department of Corrections, the Division of Customs Service, or the Labor and Immigration Identification System.

Federalization of local immigration not only marked another chapter in the CNMI's 34-year relationship with the United States, but also leaves American Samoa as the only U.S. territory that controls its own borders.

DESTRUCTIVE

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Rendova and Tetepare, as well as deep scars on hills and cliffs caused by landslides, he said.

The largest quake—magnitude 7.2—happened about 9:30 a.m. local time Monday and caused the tsunami to hit the coast a short time later. At least nine other quakes greater than magnitude 5.0 have rocked the earthquake-prone region since.

Marshall said hundreds of villagers had been affected. "But it would appear that the Solomon Islands has gotten away comparatively lightly," with no deaths or injuries reported so far, he told New Zealand's National Radio.

Residents said past disasters made them better prepared this time.

The provincial capital of Gizo was badly damaged in April 2007 when a 8.1-magnitude quake unleashed a tsunami that slammed into the island, killing more than 50 people. A quake-churned tsunami that killed more than 200 on nearby Samoa and Tonga in September was another reminder, locals said.

"People are very sensitive, as a quake conjures up memories and people immediately begin going to higher ground," Marshall said.

"The fact it was daylight, the isolated nature of the wave and that the landslides were in a relatively sparsely populated area" also helped, he said.

In the provincial capital Gizo, dive shop owner Danny Kennedy said the general rule is that "if there's anything more than 20 seconds of shaking or any sea water recedes, head for the hills."

A police boat patrolled Tuesday to check the coastline, where many homes are at sea level, making them vulnerable to tsunamis, National Disaster Management Office spokesman Julian Makaa said. No casualties had been reported so far, he said.

"Two damage assessment teams have been sent to Rendova to walk through and conduct damage surveys, but no casualties have been reported," Makaa told The Associated Press.

One village, Retavo, home to about 20 people, was reportedly completely inundated by a wall of sea water up to 10 feet (3 meters) high, but Makaa said no deaths or injuries had been reported there.

Another disaster management official, Loti Yates, said earlier at least 16 houses were destroyed and 32 damaged in Baniata village on Rendova, an island some 190 miles (300 kilometers) from the capital, Honiara, where about 3,600 people live.

"One report from police was that one village was hit by a 6 to 10 foot (2-3 meter) wall of sea water," Yates said. "It was a total inundation police saw in a flyover."

Makaa said the village, Retavo, had a population of about 20 and no deaths or injuries were reported yet.

A government boat arrived in the area Tuesday with emergency food, water and tarpaulins for survivors.

Ten foreign tourists were staying on Tetepare Island, an uninhabited eco-tourism site, and the four Germans, four Britons and two New Zealanders were evacuated.

The U.S. Geological Survey has recorded nine earthquakes greater than magnitude 5.0 in the region since late Sunday. The magnitude 7.2 was centered 64 miles (103 kilometers) southeast of Gizo, and followed a magnitude 6.5 tremor less than two hours earlier centered 54 miles (90 kilometers) southeast of Gizo at a depth of 6 miles (10 kilometers).

ROTA

From Page 1

the previous events occurred in June, October, and November of 2008 and October of 2009.

Maternity colonies are where fruit bats gather for breeding and infant-rearing.

"Hunting at colonies kills many fruit bats at once and severely inhibits the ability of the fruit bat population to recover," DFW said. "However, research has shown that if the fruit bat population is not hunted, it can begin to recover. Rota has the last viable population of fruit bats in the southern Marianas. The recovery of the species in this region is dependent on recovery and persistence of the population on Rota."

There has been a moratorium on hunting in the CNMI since the 1990s and in 2005 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Mariana fruit bats in the CNMI as threatened due to an alarming decline in the fruit bat population.

"The only hope for the recovery of the fruit bat population in the CNMI is for the people to become involved and support the ban on hunting. There is still hope for the recovery of the fruit bat if the people of the CNMI work together to stop illegal hunting and trade of fruit bats in the Marianas," DFW said.

The Mariana fruit bat—a medium-sized bat found only in Guam and the CNMI—is known as "fanihi" in Chamorro.

Currently, fewer than 100 individual Mariana fruit bats remain on Guam and a fluctuating population of 1,100 remains on Rota. In the northern islands (all islands north of Farallon de Medinilla) fewer than 5,000 individuals remain. On Saipan and Tinian, few individuals are known to inhabit or visit these islands. ***(DFW)***

OAG

From Page 1

ney General's opinion on the issue. "I am elated that the matter has been cleared up, and I'd like to now move forward with the important matters affecting the college as a chairman of the Board of Regents," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

During last week's election of board officials, NMC legal counsel Jesus Borja had warned that lawyers cannot practice their profession if they are members of a board or commission. That had prompted King to renounce her law practice for two years, when her term with the board expires.

That, however, is not necessary, according to Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham. In the legal opinion he issued yesterday, he said a private attorney is not required to cease the practice of law to become a member of a board, commission, or task force so long as provisions of the Government Ethics Code of 1992 are followed.

Buckingham said that subject to the filing of appropriate disclosures of information, the Government Ethics Code of 1992 does not expressly prohibit an attorney engaged in the private practice of law from serving as a member of a board, commission, or task force.

Attorneys, he said, bring a skill set applied both in and outside the courtroom. Their analytical skills are also widely used by organizations to improve performance.

Oral opinion

Based on the oral opinion of the NMC legal counsel, serving as a regent or as president of the Board of Regents means that an individual is a "public official" within the meaning of the Government Ethics Code of 1992; and an individual who is a private attorney cannot continue to work as a private attorney and also serve as a "public official" or president of the Board of Regents.

"The statute says a public official may not practice law at the same time," Borja had said.

Buckingham pointed out, though, that the Legislature has identified disclosure as a critical method to address ethical concerns. This objective recognized that there are related individual rights involved: right to privacy, and not restraining the right of a qualified person to seek or hold public office.

To require a private attorney to cease the practice of law in the event of service as a member of a board, commission or task force would be inconsistent with the overall statutory framework as established, Buckingham said .

It will also create not merely the risk but the fact of "restraining the right of a qualified person to seek or hold public office."

It will also deny private practitioners of the law an opportunity to serve the government and community at large through pro bono public service and would deny the Commonwealth of the expertise of private attorneys serving as members of boards, commissions, and task forces.

NMC's interests

King said she's sure that Borja was just trying to protect the interests of the college in his role as legal counsel for NMC.

King had defeated former board chair Charles Cepeda for the position after garnering the support of regents Maria Paz Younis, Frank Rabauliman, and Andrew Orsini in the election held last week.

"I would like to thank Charles Cepeda for his past leadership of the college. I still look to him for guidance, because he has the benefit of experience. And I'd like to ask for the confidence of all regents, including Malua Peter and Elaine Orilla. All the regents have the best interests of NMC in mind," she added.

During last week's board discussion, some members raised the case of JP San Nicolas, a former regent from Tinian who is also a lawyer. The board had allowed him to serve as chairman of the board.

HOUSE

From Page 1

resolution.

When asked about it, Torres said: "I have personal reservations." He did not elaborate.

Lawmakers said Tighe is being recognized for her many outstanding contributions in building the literary wealth of the CNMI, raising the civic consciousness of the community, and offering present and future generations a model of excellence in public service and active citizenship.

"Members of the House recognize and commend the extraordinary accomplishments of Ms. Ruth L. Tighe as a professional librarian, writer, educator, and citizen of the Northern Mariana Islands," the resolution partly reads.

House members also thanked Tighe for her "many years of devoted service to the greater good of the Northern Marianas community."

Tighe, who will turn 79 on July 9, first came to Micronesia in the late 1970s from the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science to assist Guam, the CNMI and the Trust Territory of the Pacific in preparing for the first ever White House Conference on Libraries held in Washington, D.C. in 1979.

Tighe returned to Saipan in December 1980 to serve as a consultant to the Library Services section of the Department of Education. After several years with the Department of Education/Public School System, Tighe worked for Northern Marianas College, where she established its library.

H.R. 16-104 said that because of Tighe's adaptability, intellectual curiosity, and exceptional writing and research skills, her long career includes assisting the Coastal Resources Management, the Division of Environmental Quality and the Division of Energy in the development of their printed materials. She also reported for *Marianas Variety*, and also served as editor and chief reporter of the *Marianas Review*.

Tighe also served as public information officer for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and as legal researcher for Eason & Halsell before retiring.

She is best known for her weekly column, "On My Mind," an opinion piece that has appeared locally in one form or another since the mid-1980s, and can be found online at http://net.saipan.com/personal/omm.

Tighe has often been seen and heard at public hearings and meeting on a wide range of subjects, including those involving the health and safety of residents and the environment. She is also an active community member, and is involved in the activities of organizations such as Beautify CNMI!, Friends of the Monument, Commonwealth Retirees Association, Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, the Friends of the Arts, and Friends of the Zoo.

Tighe was born in Wurzburg, Germany on July 9, 1931, and later emigrated with her family to the United States in 1934. She has five children and three grandchildren.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the State University of New York, and her Master of Library Science from Columbia University in New York City.

The 16th House of Representatives also recognized yesterday the contributions to the community of the late Vicente "Pacho" M. Sablan, who served as speaker in the 4th Legislature, as well as the late Roque Celis, known for his enduring service as Saipan Little League Baseball statistician.

Cheaper health insurance for Fund members eyed

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A new health insurance plan that would require smaller premiums for lesser benefits has gained the tentative support of the NMI Retirement Fund board, which is now reviewing the concept.

Fund Administrator Mark A. Aguon reported during Monday's special board meeting that health insurance carrier Aetna Global Benefits has submitted a proposal advocating for an alternative option for members.

The proposed "low-option plan" is aimed at individuals who want to avail of a cheaper health insurance coverage for themselves and their families.

Saipan Tribune learned that the proposal would reduce the premium rate from 80 to 70 percent and would lower benefits from some $300,000 to $100,000.

Aetna Global is the current health insurance carrier of the Fund. At present, it has only one plan, which began administering in July 2008.

There are over 3,000 members under the Fund's health insurance plan, all paying a high premium across all classifications: single, couple, and family.

Aguon said the final numbers under the proposed plan will be finalized today in a committee meeting.

"Our plan is to provide options for members who want to have a good health insurance. But because many are struggling now to keep their high premium under the existing plan, we want to provide them an alternative," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

Aguon said a significant number of plan members have withdrawn from the insurance plan due to financial difficulties.

"Our goal is to put as many members on board as possible because Aetna has good health insurance coverage. Maybe those people who are struggling to maintain their premiums can afford this lower plan," he said.

Aguon said that offering the alternative plan has been in the works for quite some time now. Once the numbers are determined, he said the board is expected to make a decision.

"It will depend on the numbers that we will work out. We just need to have a good presentation for the board to make a reasonable decision," he said.

Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar has expressed support for the proposal but he said a full review by the board is still needed.

Igisomar referred the matter to the group health insurance committee, which is chaired by trustee Adelina Roberto. The committee is set to meet today.

"I am favorable for it because there's really nothing wrong with the proposal. But, of course, we need to give ourselves time to review and evaluate the whole proposal. We need to weigh the cost versus the benefits before we make our decision," he told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Igisomar said there are retirees under the existing plan who don't have fixed incomes that will enable them to pay for the high premium coverage. The alternative plan, he said, would help these retirees keep their health insurance coverage.

The new rate for Group Health Life Insurance Program took effect last Nov. 1, 2009.

Under the single enrollment plan, members pay $64.72 bi-weekly while retiree pay $70.11 semi-monthly.

For couple enrollment, the new rate is $132.68 bi-weekly while retiree couples pay $143.73 semi-monthly.

The emergency request for proposals was issued last month.

Netcare Health and Insurance terminated its contract with the NMI Retirement Fund after it failed to settle a contract dispute with the agency. It ended its services on Dec. 15, 2009, just seven months away from the expiration of its contract with the Fund. The two-year contract was signed in July 2008.

The company had wanted to raise the insurance rate to more than double, which the Fund disapproved. Under the company's two-year contract, it was being paid $8 per pay period for members making $20,000 a year. Netcare wanted increase this to $16 to $20.

For family enrollment, the new rate is $207.10 biweekly and $224.36 semi-monthly for retirees.

The new rate reflects the 50-50 cost-sharing of both the government and its employees.

The new rate was adopted to address the renewal of Aetna Global Benefits as the health program's carrier.

The Fund earlier said that the adoption of new rates will also cause critical changes to the GHLI program that are crucial to its proper operation and survival.

AFTER GETTING ONLY ONE PROPOSER:

Fund extends emergency RFP *for life insurance*

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Retirement Fund's board of trustees has extended the period of accepting proposals from companies that want to run the Fund's life insurance program.

During Monday's special board meeting, the trustees approved the recommendation to extend the deadline by one week after being told that only one company submitted a proposal to the agency.

Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar confirmed yesterday that the new deadline for the emergency RFP is Jan. 11 at 5pm.

Igisomar said the board decided to extend the announcement to allow more companies to participate.

"I know it's an emergency. But the extension will allow more participation and comparison review, which hopefully would result in a negotiated fair premium," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

Except for the new deadline, no other changes were made on the RFP, he said. Also, the trustees consulted their legal counsel first to prevent any potential legal issues about the extension.

To date, the agency has received 10 death claims, including three that were received last weekend, Aguon said.

While waiting for a new carrier, all claims inquiry are being directed to the Group Health Life Insurance Program.

PMT DONATION
Pacific Micronesia Tour makes a donation to Grace Christian High School as education tax credit for calendar year 2009. At left is Masaru Sunaga, PMT's assistant general manager. At right is PMT manager Keiko Shimizu. In the center are students and Grace Christian's School administration staff. PMT also made similar donation to Kagman High School, Marianas High School, and Mount Carmel School. PMT donates ETC checks to different schools every year.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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MELL SENTOSA	031E	12/26 Sat	12/24 Thu	12/24 Thu	12/22 Tue	12/19 Sat	1/1 Fri	12/28 Mon	12/27 Sun	12/20 Sun	12/20 Sun	12/28 Mon	1/1 Fri	1/3 Sun	1/5 Tue
MELL SEMBAWANG	024E	1/2 Sat	12/31 Thu	12/31 Thu	12/29 Tue	12/26 Sat	1/8 Fri	1/4 Mon	1/3 Sun	12/27 Sun	12/27 Sun	1/4 Mon	1/8 Fri	1/10 Sun	1/12 Tue
MELL SERAPONG	003E	1/9 Sat	1/7 Thu	1/7 Thu	1/5 Tue	1/2 Sat	1/15 Fri	1/11 Mon	1/10 Sun	1/3 Sun	1/3 Sun	1/11 Mon	1/15 Fri	1/17 Sun	1/19 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	032E	1/16 Sat	1/14 Thu	1/14 Thu	1/12 Tue	1/9 Sat	1/22 Fri	1/18 Mon	1/17 Sun	1/10 Sun	1/10 Sun	1/18 Mon	1/22 Fri	1/24 Sun	1/26 Tue
MELL SEMBAWANG	025E	1/23 Sat	1/21 Thu	1/21 Thu	1/19 Tue	1/16 Sat	1/29 Fri	1/25 Mon	1/24 Sun	1/17 Sun	1/17 Sun	1/25 Mon	1/29 Fri	1/31 Sun	2/2 Tue
MELL SERAPONG	004E	1/30 Sat	1/28 Thu	1/28 Thu	1/26 Tue	1/23 Sat	2/5 Fri	2/1 Mon	1/31 Sun	1/24 Sun	1/24 Sun	2/1 Mon	2/5 Fri	2/7 Sun	2/9 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETD Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA Davao	ETA GenSan	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
MELL SENTOSA	031E	1/9 Sat	1/10 Sun	1/10 Sun	1/12 Mon	1/13 Wed	1/15 Fri	1/17 Sun	SKIP	1/22 Fri	1/23 Sat	1/28 Thu	2/16 Tue	1/31 Sun	1/27 Wed
MELL SEMBAWANG	024E	1/16 Sat	1/17 Sun	1/17 Sun	SKIP	1/20 Wed	1/22 Fri	1/24 Sun	SKIP	1/29 Fri	1/30 Sat	2/4 Thu	2/23 Tue	2/7 Sun	2/3 Wed
MELL SERAPONG	003E	1/23 Sat	1/24 Sun	1/24 Sun	1/26 Mon	1/27 Wed	1/29 Fri	1/31 Sun	SKIP	2/5 Fri	2/6 Sat	2/11 Thu	3/2 Tue	2/14 Sun	2/10 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	032E	1/30 Sat	1/31 Sun	1/31 Sun	SKIP	2/3 Wed	2/5 Fri	2/7 Sun	SKIP	2/12 Fri	2/13 Sat	2/18 Thu	3/9 Tue	2/21 Sun	2/17 Wed
MELL SEMBAWANG	025E	2/6 Sat	2/7 Sun	2/7 Sun	2/9 Mon	2/10 Wed	2/12 Fri	2/14 Sun	SKIP	2/19 Fri	2/20 Sat	2/25 Thu	3/16 Tue	2/28 Sun	2/24 Wed
MELL SERAPONG	004E	2/13 Sat	2/14 Sun	2/14 Sun	SKIP	2/17 Wed	2/19 Fri	2/21 Sun	SKIP	2/26 Fri	2/27 Sat	3/4 Thu	3/23 Tue	3/7 Sun	3/3 Wed

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Estate sues CUC, DPL over taking of land

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An estate has sued the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the Department of Public Lands for the alleged unlawful taking of four parcels of land on Saipan more than a decade ago without paying compensation.

Juana F. Faisao, administratrix of the estate of Jacinto K. Faisao, asked the Superior Court to declare that the estate is entitled to $215,776 in compensation for the taking of its property on Sept. 19, 1998.

The Faisao estate, through counsel Edward C. Arriola, also asked the court to order CUC and DPL to pay severance damages caused by the taking.

The estate also sought additional compensation, attorney's fees, and court costs.

Arriola stated in the complaint that the Faisao estate is the legal owner of four parcels of real property: 444 square meters valued at $39,072; 1,005 sq. meters valued at 88,440; 757 sq. meters valued at $66,616; and 246 sq. meters valued at $21,648.

Arriola said CUC entered the property and has been taking possession of it for road improvements and easement for public utilities since Sept. 19, 1998.

The lawyer argued that CUC's entry and possession constituted a taking of the estate's private land for a public purpose.

"Today, the estate's property is being used by the general public for a public purpose as part of an existing public roadway and utilities easements by residents and entities of the CNMI," he said.

Neither CUC nor DPL, the lawyer said, has tendered any compensation for the taking of the estate's property, despite the government's taking and use of the property for a public use.

Arriola said the 5th and 14th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution prohibit the government from taking private property without just compensation.

"The government's failure to provide just compensation for the private property that it summarily appropriated constitutes an unconstitutional taking," he added.

CK diocese to start Jubilee celebrations Friday

The Diocese of Chalan Kanoa will start its series of Jubilee prayer services this Friday, Jan. 9, 2010, at the Mount Carmel Cathedral in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan.

Featuring the 25th anniversary theme of *Fiat Voluntas Tua* (*Thy Will Be Done*), the services will begin at 7pm and continue for nine days with the Liturgy of the Hours (Evening Prayers) and Novena to the Holy Spirit, according to a diocese statement.

CONTACT INFO
Mount Carmel Rectory
Tel: 234-3000

The Liturgy of the Hours is the set of daily prayers prescribed by the Catholic Church to be recited during a set cycle of seven canonical hours by the clergy, religious orders and the laity. They consist of psalms, hymns and scriptural readings, recited on three major hours and four minor hours. Canon law requires priests to recite the entire liturgy of the hours each day. The Second Vatican Council urged the Christian laity to take up the practice and as a result, many people recite one, several or all of them. Separate from the Mass and with its focus on the sanctity of the Church, they are principally prayers of praise and petition. For the Jubilee prayer services, recitation of the Evening Prayers will be the emphasis in praise of and petition for God's continued blessing.

The Liturgy of the Hours (Evening Prayers) will be followed by a Novena to the Holy Spirit. The Novena is a powerful prayer to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity for light and strength. It is commonly termed as the Prayer of the Seven Gifts: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of God. "We will recite the novena to appeal for granting of these gifts to the people of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, Bishop Tomas A. Camacho as its 25-years shepherd, and for those entrusted with the election of a new Bishop," states the diocese statement.

Each of the 13 parishes will be designated or grouped to host one of the nine days. Each respective parish priest will preside over the prayer services and give a brief presentation. "Everyone in the Diocese is invited to partake in these communal events. Prayer guides will be provided in English," the diocese statement states.

A Mass to commemorate the actual date of the 25th anniversary is set for 6am on Jan. 13, 2009, at the Mount Carmel Cathedral. All 6am Masses and intentions at other Saipan churches will be moved to the Cathedral as all clergy will be in attendance there.

On Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, the Novena to the Holy Spirit will be set for 2pm, followed at 3pm by a diocesan-wide Mass of Thanksgiving to launch the jubilee year celebration. In order for the parishioners and clergy to participate at the 3pm Mass of Thanksgiving at the Mount Carmel Cathedral, there will be no 6pm Masses in the parishes on this day. Mass intentions will be transferred to the 3pm Mass at the Mount Carmel Cathedral. Members of the clergy from Rota, Saipan, Tinian, and Guam will be in attendance. All parochial and ministry teams will also be in attendance and joined by various civic and public leaders. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and first lady Josie Fitial (not in photo) pledge $6,000 to the steering committee members for the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa Jubilee Celebration. From left, Cathy Cepeda, Fr. Ike Ayuyu, Fitial, Charles Cepeda and Fr. Ryan Jimenez.

ACE OF DIAMOND TUNA COOK-OFF

OFFICIAL RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. Eligibility. This contestants who are at least 18 years of age or older and amateurs. Professionals are not eligible to enter. For purposes of this event, "Professionals" are defined as anyone who makes money through professional cooking, including, but not limited to chefs, food editors, home economists, and food preparation editors. Employee of Joeten Enterprises and the immediate families of each are not eligible to enter.

2. The ACE OF DIAMOND TUNA Cook-Off will be held at Joeten Susupe on Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 1pm and will be limited to twenty (20) contestants. Contest registration will be on a first-come, first serve basis. To enter the contest, individuals must submit their name, address, daytime phone number and recipe; all information is to be typed on a 8.5"x11" sheet of paper, to the Joeten Shopping Center offices, Susupe, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm. All contestants will be required to sign the Official Rules upon entering the contest. Each contestant may enter only one recipe for one of the following categories: original appetizer, casserole,stew,stir-fry,salad or sandwich. Each recipe entry must use at least one 7-ounce can from the ACE OF DIAMOND TUNA. Last day/time to submit entry forms and recipe is Wednesday, January 15, 2010 at 5pm.

3. Recipes must not have been published and/or cannot have won prizes or awards in other contests and must not restricted in any way. Submission of the recipes gives Joeten Enterprises, Inc. the right to modify, edit, adapt, publish and/or use the recipe in any way and in any and all media without limitation and without consideration or payment to the entrant.

4. Each participating contestant will be given a Joeten T-shirt. Contestants are encouraged to wear the T-shirt during each competition.

5. Contestants must bring their dish for judging by 12:45pm on January 16, 2010. Any dishes brought in after 12:45PM will be disqualified. Judging will begin promptly at 1:15pm. Final heating, cooking and presentation preparation may be done at the contest site. Power outlets will be provided. Contestants must bring all required preparation materials such as warming plates,crock pots, etc. The individual who entered the contest must be present at the judging of their dish. Entries will be judged on the basis of taste, originality and overall presentation. The judges will be chosen by Joeten Enterprises, Inc.

6. A first, second and third place winner will be selected. The first place winner will received a year supply of ACE of Diamond Tuna (1 case per month ACE DIAMOND TUNA 12/12). The second place winner will receive 6 month supply of ACE of Diamond Tuna. The third place winner will received $50 gift cetificate.

7. All winners will be required to sign an Affidavit of Eligibility and Liability/Publicity Release that will, among other things, allow the use of winners' name by the sponsors. Failure to comply with this condition will result in forfeiture of prizes. All applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. Void where taxed, restricted or prohibited by law. All taxes are the sole responsibility of the winners.

8. Interpretation of the contest rules shall be at the sole discretion of Joeten Enterprises. Any decisions made shall be binding on all contestants. Judges decisions are final.

9. Contest is sponsored by Joeten Enterprises.

10. Contest void where prohibited. All prizes will be awarded. Prizes are nonrefundable, nontransferable, and cannot be redeemed for cash. Winners must consent to use of his/her likeness and/or photograph for advertising purposes without additional compensation. Taxes on prizes are responsibility of the winner. All recipes become the property of Joeten Enterprises, Inc., and will not be returned. Joeten Enterprises is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries.

Joeten Enterprises, Inc.

ACE OF DIAMOND TUNA COOK-OFF Competition!

Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.

JOETEN SUSUPE

LIMIT 20 CONTESTANT

WINNER RECEIVE

1st Place Prize - *1 year supply of ACE of Diamond Tuna*
2nd Place Prize - *6 month supply of ACE of Diamond Tuna*
3rd Place Prize - *$50.00 Joeten Gift Check*

To Enter Print the following:

Your name, address, daytime phone number and ACE Tune recipe. *On an 8.5x11 sheet and submit to Joeten Enterprises at Susupe shopping center. Monday-Friday, 8am.-5pm. For more information please call 234-6446*

Categories:

Each contestant may enter only one recipe in one of the following categories:

- ***Original Appetizer***
- ***Casserole***
- ***Stew***
- ***Stir-Fry***
- ***Salad***
- ***Sandwhich***

59 checks for ex-garment workers uncollected

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fifty-nine of the 215 checks issued by the Garment Workers Trust Fund to former garment workers remain uncollected, trust fund chair Timothy Bellas disclosed yesterday.

Bellas said the checks amount to $350 each, for a total of $20,650.

Bellas began releasing the checks amounting to a total of $75,250 in the second week of December 2009. The amount is the trust's one-time charitable contribution to former garment workers who are still in the CNMI and have uncollected unpaid wages and damages.

Bellas said he just wrote Federal Ombudsman Pamela Brown and to the CNMI Department of Labor yesterday, informing them that the trust still has some checks and that if the workers don't come to pick them up by Jan. 15, he will put the money back into the trust fund.

The CNMI Labor and the Office of the Federal Ombudsman submitted the 215 applications on behalf of former garment workers with unpaid wages.

"When the 15th comes around, I'm going to put the money back into the trust fund. I'll divide the money among the charitable institutions for the same proportion," Bellas said.

If the 59 have already left the CNMI, Bellas said they are not going to reissue the checks in somebody else's name.

"We don't have the time, the energy, or the personnel to investigate those issues to see if it's true or not true or who's going to cash it," he said.

"So basically if they want somebody to pick it up we'll give the check to somebody, but the check will still be made out to the name of the original worker," Bellas said.

With respect to trust's planned donation to charitable institutions, Bellas said he is setting a meeting with his co-trustees to distribute the rest of the money.

The trust has over $500,000 in leftover money from the $20-million settlement in the class action against the garment industry.

The trust has received applications from 18 charitable institutions in the CNMI. It said it will not choose one charitable institution, but select those qualified and then divvy up the money among them.

"Basically we're looking at somewhere between now and 15 to have tentative distribution and then I'm just going to take the remaining money that will come back from these checks," Bellas said.

Bellas said he will submit a final accounting to U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson.

'Rota recount will inspire confidence'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court's order directing the Commonwealth Election Commission to conduct a recount of ballots cast in the Rota election will inspire confidence in the election process among the people of Rota, according to attorney Michael Dotts.

"We are very pleased with the Supreme Court's decision," said Dotts, who is counsel for Ross Hugh Songao Manglona and Rep. Victor Borja Hocog, the two losing independent candidates for the House and mayoral races on Rota.

With the Supreme Court's ruling, Dotts said, the people of Rota will be able to see the actual counting of votes the way it should have been done on Nov. 7.

Dotts expressed confidence that his clients will prevail in the recount.

Manglona sued his lone rival in the election, Teresita A. Santos (Independent), who was elected to a House seat.

Manglona also named defendants the two winners in the Senate seat for Rota—Jovita Maratita Taimanao and Juan Manglona Ayuyu (both Independents).

In a separate lawsuit, Hocog, an Independent candidate for mayor of Rota, sued the winning candidate, Melchor Atalig Mendiola (Independent). The two lawsuits were consolidated.

Superior Court presiding judge Robert Naraja had initially dismissed the lawsuits, prompting Manglona and Hocog to appeal.

In their Dec. 31, 2009 opinion, the CNMI Supreme Court justices affirmed Naraja's finding of error on the part of the Election Commission and reversed the dismissal of the complaint.

Citing violation of election laws, the justices ordered the CEC to conduct a recount of all ballots cast in the Rota election. The justices directed the Superior Court to supervise the recount.

Naraja set the recounting of votes for tomorrow, Thursday, at 1pm on Rota.

Last day today to reserve seats for Chamber installation dinner

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is reminding its members to make reservations now if they intend to attend the 2010 Installation Dinner on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010.

"Because dinner is plated and not buffet, advance reservations are required and must be made by the close of business today, Jan. 6," said Chamber executive director Kyle Calabrese.

The installation dinner will be held poolside at the Hyatt Regency Saipan on the evening of Saturday, at 6pm. The evening's keynote speaker will be U.S. Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

The Chamber will also announce the recipient of its Businessperson of the Year award at the installation dinner. This year's nominees are James Arenovski, Vicente "Ben" Babauta, and Phillip Mendiola-Long. ***(SCC)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB10-OHS-033

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 15, 2010
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"YARD MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR THE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY BUILDING NO.1326 AND TRAINING CENTER BUILDING NO.1358"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/S/ PATRICK J. TENORIO
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP10-DOF-040

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 05, 2010 TIME: 2:00 P.M.

"CNMI GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADE PROJECT"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2010 AT 10:00 A.M., AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER, SECRETARY OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S CONFERENCE ROOM NO. 3 LOCATED IN GARAPAN, SAIPAN. FOR OFF-ISLAND VENDORS INTERESTED IN ATTENDING THE PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL REQUEST TO finance.edp@cnmiarra.net FOR THE TELECONFERENCE NUMBER. ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT MUST BE ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL TO finance.edp@cnmiarra.net NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/s/ ROBERT A. SCHRACK
ACTING SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
2010-CDA-03RFP

CLOSING DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2010 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE FOR CDA TINIAN BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL SPECIFICATION MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SAIPAN OFFICE, GUALO RAI WAKIN'S BLDG. OR THE CDA OFFICE TINIAN AT THE KING'S BLDG. DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS OR BY FACSIMILE REQUEST TO 235-7147.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2010 at 6:00 PM, Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten DanDan Bldg., Saipan

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes
5. Communications

B. Reports
1. Chairperson
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Administrator
5. Committees
6. Legal Counsel

C. Public Comments

D. Permits/ Applications/ Rezones: review and decide.
1. TJ Amusements Inc., Conditional Use App# 2009-2832, Lot #013 D 42 (Garapan Fishing Base)

E. Old Business.
1. Update on Laolao Bay Golftel Conditional Use Application #2008-0302
2. Update on changes to zoning maps 23 & 26 (rezones)
3. Update on the Adult Business Park

F. New Business.
1. Zoning Enforcement Activity Report
2. Proposed measures for nonconforming structures/ uses & nuisance (Presentation; no action)
3. Proposed amendments to Saipan Zoning Law of 2008
   a. Update on proposed amendments to the 2008 Saipan Zoning Law (Presentation; no action)

G. Executive (Closed) Session - Consult with Legal Counsel regarding pending or anticipated legal matters

H. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact Victor Barrett, Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Chair, Zoning Board

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 6, 1999

Legislators blast US for 'strong-arm tactic'

Standing by the governor, key members of the CNMI Legislature yesterday lashed out at the "strong-arm tactic" being used by the Clinton administration to push a federal takeover proposal in the Northern Marianas despite overwhelming rejection by island leaders. They defended Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio for allegedly agreeing to the plan during a brief meeting with President Bill Clinton on Guam last November, saying that the local chief executive might have been misunderstood. Senate Floor leader Pete P. Reyes said it was unlikely for the governor to veer away from his long-standing opposition against takeover move, especially after CNMI has spent millions of dollars to thwart the federal agenda.

Without written order, MVA budget to be cut

The Office of Management and Budget has informed the Marianas Visitors Authority that it will not be spared from the 13.4 percent budget cut in the second quarter of fiscal year 1999 unless Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio issues a written order exempting the tourism agency from the scheduled reduction. "Just like everybody else, MVA will get a budget cut because we have not received any written order from the governor stopping us from doing it," said Vicky Villagomez, OMB special assistant. The governor has earlier pledged not to include MVA from the budget slash since it is already getting a reduction in the 70 percent share from hotel occupancy tax as a result of the continuous decline in visitor arrivals as a result of the Asian financial crisis.

Jan. 6, 2000

Poll suit against BOE dismissed

Superior Court Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama yesterday dismissed the lawsuit against the Board of Elections over the result of the race for the Board of Education representative on Rota on several grounds, chief of which is failure to include the winning candidate as defendant in the case. Juanita M. Taisacan, write-in candidate in the elections in the first district, also failed to follow requirements of the law when she contested the results of the Nov. 6 polls, according to the decision. No documents, such as statement of verification, affidavit and declaration, were provided to the court when Ms. Taisacan filed an amended complaint last month to support her initial claim that the BOE committed mistakes in tallying the votes to give her opponent, Marja Lee Taitano, a slim margin of 12 votes.

Jr. Larry Hillbroom's lawyers face contempt charge

Federal Court Judge Alex Munson yesterday ordered five lawyers and their clients, Junior Larry Hillbroom and his guardian Naoko Imeong, to appear in court next month to justify why they should not be held in contempt for violation of earlier orders. Attorneys David J. Lujan, Barry J. Israel, Kevin P.H. Sumida, counsels for the two, and Thomas Tarpley, of the Junior Larry Hillbroom Trust, could face disqualification or suspension from the civil complaint filed by James E. Hollman. If found guilty of contempt of court, they could also be compelled to compensate the plaintiff for losses sustained due to the conduct of the defendants as well as attorney's fees and expenses. It could also weaken their defense against the case alleging bad faith litigation.

Jan. 6, 2003

FEMA regional chief to visit Rota

The regional director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency is set to arrive in the Northern Marianas on Wednesday, as the agency vows to expedite the CNMI's request to reduce the local share in the cost of rehabilitating Rota. FEMA Region IX director Jeff Griffin, who is based in Oakland, California, would first visit Saipan to meet Gov. Juan N. Babauta before proceeding to Rota. Griffin would also meet with Rota Mayor Benjamin Manglona. FEMA public information officer Ed Conley disclosed this, adding that FEMA is reviewing the CNMI's request to reduce its share of rehabilitation costs from 25 percent to 10 percent.

Tourists eyed from freezing Hokkaido

The Commonwealth's market base in Japan is expected to further broaden, with the CNMI to be featured in a popular television show in Hokkaido, an island currently locked in winter snow. Japanese television star Noriyuki Sato arrived on Saipan last week to film tourism sites in the Northern Marianas. When he returns to Hokkaido, he would be giving out five vacation packages to the CNMI to his fans, according to Gov. Juan N. Babauta. Sato is host of Talk de Hokkaido, a daily talk show on Japanese television. The show recently had its 2,000th airing.

Fernandez says she takes students' petition seriously

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez said yesterday she takes seriously the petition presented her by students who are seeking an explanation for the non-renewal of a veteran instructor's contract.

She said the petition is a strong sentiment of the students and "I take it very seriously."

However, she has yet to reveal any plans for long-time instructor Sam McPhetres, whose contract was not renewed after 26 years of serving the college. Today is McPhetres' last day at NMC.

A group of students had circulated a signature petition on campus, urging the college president to justify McPhetres' non-renewal.

"First and foremost, I want to applaud the students for being involved in important issues surrounding the college. Their voice is important and should be heard through the proper channels that are made for this purpose," Fernandez told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

She said she's been talking with students to address their concerns. "The meetings have been very fruitful and I will continue meeting them as long as they are needed," she said.

Fernandez

Fernandez said she also met with the other groups to hear their concerns as well as the staff and faculty members to discuss issues and concerns.

As for McPhetres, Fernandez said that as a general policy, she does not discuss personnel matters publicly.

"I've always stated that I am open to meeting with and listening to the concerns of Mr. McPhetres," she said, adding that she will not use the media as a forum to address sensitive personnel matters.

During last week's board meeting, the officers of the Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College voted in support of Fernandez following criticisms about her management style.

Fernandez said she looks forward to closely working with the Board of Regents to maintain the strong accreditation position of the college for the benefit of students. NMC has over 900 students.

NMC, under the leadership of Fernandez, managed to get its accreditation back, effective up to 2012. This was quite a turnaround after the college was placed on probation, then show-cause status in 2007 and 2008.

The Board of Regents, under board chair Janet King, is expected to revisit existing college policies and procedures as well as employees' contracts as a result of the concerns raised by a large number of employees.

Fernandez's performance is also expected to come under scrutiny.

"I cannot speak whatever decision they might make… if there's one…but certainly, we have a process in place and I am sure that there will be an opportunity to discuss all the issues and hopefully resolve it," said Fernandez during last week's board meeting.

The president said this new year, she looks forward to a good working relationship with everyone.

High court clarifies NMI employment law in Barcinas case

In 2007, Homayan Kabir, a security guard at Dandan Elementary School, filed suit in federal court against the Public School System and Jonas Barcinas, the principal of Dandan Elementary, alleging violations of federal and CNMI law. The suit was based on Kabir's allegations that during his employment with the school, Barcinas sexually harassed him, including episodes of unwelcome sexual contact. The federal claims were aimed at PSS and the local claim—for assault and battery—was against Barcinas alone.

Barcinas

In response to Kabir's federal suit, the CNMI Attorney General, representing Barcinas, filed a motion to substitute the Commonwealth as the sole defendant against Kabir's sexual assault claim. The basis for the motion was the Commonwealth Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act of 2006, CELRTCA, which protects Commonwealth employees from lawsuits arising from actions taken during their employment. Under CELRTCA, an employee is protected from suit—and the government is automatically substituted as defendant in the employee's place—when the CNMI Attorney General files with the court certification that "the defendant employee was acting within the scope of his/her office or employment at the time of the incident out of which the claim arose." In this case, the Attorney General's motion for substitution was accompanied by certification that Barcinas was acting within the scope of his employment as principal of Dandan Elementary School at the time of the alleged incident. The Attorney General's certification was based on the conclusion that the alleged incident never occurred.

After the CNMI Attorney General filed his motion to substitute, he represented to the federal district court that once the Commonwealth Government took Barcinas' place, the government would move to dismiss the assault and battery claims based on the Commonwealth Government Liability Act, which exempts the government from liability for certain misconduct undertaken by its employees, including assault and battery. The district court denied the Attorney General's motion for substitution, holding that CELRTCA does not apply to suits against Commonwealth employees for intentional misconduct because the Government Liability Act provides for governmental immunity for such conduct. The court found that if the government was permitted to replace Barcinas as defendant—only to then claim immunity—the substitution would "frustrate[] the very essence of what the law is about." The denial of substitution was appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Using Rule 5 of the Commonwealth Rules of Appellate Procedure, which allows federal courts to certify unsettled questions of local law to the CNMI Supreme Court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals asked the CNMI Supreme Court to answer two questions concerning the interpretation of CELRTCA. The first question was whether the CNMI Attorney General can issue "scope-of-employment certification" when the employee being sued denies the complained of misconduct. The second question was whether CELRTCA covers employees accused of sexual assault and battery, a tort traditionally understood to occur outside the scope of employment.

In response to the Ninth Circuit's questions, the CNMI Supreme Court made the following rulings: (1) that the CNMI Supreme Court has jurisdiction to accept and answer certified questions from the federal courts; (2) that the CNMI Attorney General can issue scope-of-employment certification where the government employee denies the alleged misconduct; (3) that the Attorney General's scope-of-employment certification is subject to judicial review; and (4) that CELRTCA covers government employees sued for negligent or wrongful conduct arising from action taken within the scope of employment—including intentional torts—but that under CNMI law, intentional torts will ordinarily fall outside the scope of employment.

These holdings track the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Federal Employees Liability and Tort Reform Act (commonly known as the Westfall Act), which acted as the model for CELRTCA. In its opinion the CNMI Supreme Court recognized that although it is not bound to adopt the reasoning of federal courts' interpretations of federal statutes when interpreting CNMI law, given the similarity between the Westfall Act and CELRTCA (which are substantively identical), and given the CNMI Legislature's purpose in adopting CELRTCA (which was to cut down litigation costs in the representation of government employees sued for conduct within the scope of their employment), the CNMI Supreme Court found the U.S. Supreme Court's reasoning persuasive and interpreted CELRTCA in accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation of the Westfall Act. ***(PR)***

ON THE NET

Full opinion can be found at the CNMI Judiciary's web site under News Archives: http://www.justice.gov.mp/news_archive.aspx.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Extended deadline for NMC Bookstore buybacks

The Northern Marianas College Bookstore has extended its Textbook Buybacks time frame for the upcoming Spring 2010 semester to Jan. 8, 2010. The Bookstore will not be buying back all books that were sold in the previous semesters as newer editions may have been released.

The bookstore business hours are from 8:30am to 4pm daily. For a list of books that may be sold back, visit the Bookstore in Building E at the College's As Terlaje Campus or call Alaysha Muna at 234-5498 Ext. 1300. ***(NMC)***

Puengin Inetnon looking for vendors

The Kagman Friday Night Market is looking for interested vendors to sell food, drinks, produce, fish, clothing, and crafts starting on Jan. 15. Puengin Inetnon is Kagman's Friday Night Market, which takes place at the Kagman Community Center every government payday Friday from 4pm to 10pm. Puengin Inetnon is a family oriented event. Contact 256-7678 or email kagmankomunidatassociation@gmail.com for more information. ***(PR)***

Invitation to Bid ITB10-GOV-035

Security Services for Water Task Force Drill Rig

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Water Task Force, are soliciting sealed Bids for Security Services for the Water Task Force Drill Rig on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project Scope of Work will be available at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, on or after **December 23, 2009.**

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for **10:00 a.m.** local time, **January 11, 2010**, at the CNMI Water **Task Force Conference Room, 1316 Anatahan Dr., Capitol Hill, Saipan.**

All questions regarding this ITB must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 pm, January 8, 2010,** to Mr. Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, facsimile number (670) 664-2279.

Bids must be sealed and marked **"ITB10-GOV-035"**. For bidders within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **3:00 p.m.** local time, **January 22, 2010.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bid by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **3:00 p.m.** local time, **January 22, 2010,** and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515. For bidders located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **January 22, 2010,** and must be received no later than **February 4, 2010.** Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be opened at the Office of Procurement and Supply on **February 4, 2010** if bids are receive from outside the CNMI or on **January 25, 2010** if all bids are from within the CNMI.

The bid procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funds for this project.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfections in any bid if to do so will be in the best interest of the CNMI. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

BENIGNO R. FITIAL
Governor

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XX, Issue No. 5

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950

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EDITORIAL

Toward a less deadly Iraq

Whenever we see a report on the declining violence in Iraq, we're reminded of the old book title, "Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me." Take, for instance, the report that the civilian death toll fell in November to the lowest level since the 2003 U.S. invasion: 88 fatalities. That was after October bombings in Baghdad killed 155 people, and just ahead of December's two rounds of multiple car bombings in the capital that left at least 136 dead and hundreds wounded.

Don't get us wrong. This is far from the height of the civil war in 2006-07, when thousands of civilians died each month and every day was a struggle for typical Iraqis to get their children to and from school, go to work, do their shopping and stay alive amid attacks by ethnic death squads and car bombings. By that measure, even as dozens of pilgrims were killed and more than 150 wounded by sectarian insurgents, the Shiite Muslim holiday of Ashura last month was relatively peaceful.

Iraq is experiencing what has been called a "creeping normalization," which is not to say that life is normal for most Iraqis. The daily and monthly death tolls are still unacceptably high if the country is to rebuild its economy and public life. The al-Qaeda-affiliated group known as the Islamic State of Iraq has claimed responsibility for several of the recent bombings, although Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki also has blamed remnants of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. The bombers appear determined to show that Maliki's U.S.-backed government cannot provide security in place of American troops—now largely confined to bases and scheduled to pull out this year—and are doing what they can to reignite the embers of sectarian strife. The violence is expected to increase in the run-up to national elections on March 7, as Iraq's Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish communities vie for power.

The United States can continue to provide the Iraqi government with intelligence and other support to battle extremists, as well as advice for strengthening governance. But it is up to the Iraqis now to finish the business of political reconciliation. Besides holding another fair election, they must build an impartial judicial system, continue to integrate disaffected Sunnis into the Shiite-dominated military and political process, and figure out how to divide power and resources between the central and provincial governments, particularly in the Kurdish region. This is what will bring the death toll down even further and prevent the country's return to civil war.

(c) 2010, Los Angeles Times

They still don't love us

By FRIDA GHITIS
McClatchy Newspapers

Frida Ghitis writes about global affairs for The Miami Herald.

If you thought America would quickly regain the world's love, admiration and—most important—it's willingness to follow the U.S. lead once Barack Obama came to power, the news is disappointing. A useful guide to what has transpired comes from Venezuela's president and his most peculiar sulfurometer. Hugo Chavez, it seems, can smell the devil, especially when the Prince of Darkness takes up residence in the body of an American president.

Watching Chavez's devil-spotting shows that efforts to turn America's foes into friends will, in many cases, prove utterly useless. There is an important lesson there for everyone, including the resident of the White House.

Chavez's first supernatural sighting came at the United Nations in 2006, when the Venezuelan leader took the podium after President Bush gave a speech and announced in the solemn chamber that he could smell sulfur still hanging in the air from Bush's presence.

The air cleared up nicely after the 2008 elections. "It doesn't smell of sulfur. It's gone," declared Chavez last September, scanning the grand hall of the U.N. General Assembly. "It smells of something else," he added approvingly. "It smells of hope." The Chavez nasal gauge confirmed expectations that America's standing in the world was changing.

But hold the celebration. All is not well. On Dec. 18, Chavez revealed the new air-quality measurements during a speech in Copenhagen's U.N. Climate Change Conference. The Venezuelan's turn at the microphone came only moments after Obama, so the airborne particles tickled his sensitive nose. "It smells likes sulfur here," he said, blaming the problem, shockingly, on Obama. The "Nobel War Prize" winner, he called him.

In summary: Devil, Hope and now Devil again. America still personifies what is wrong with the world.

How is this possible? Wasn't Obama supposed to make the world love America again? Wasn't Bush the source of all of Washington's woes?

The opinion of one man, especially the president of Venezuela, is not terribly important, but it helps illustrate the folly of believing that "tone" determines international behavior. Clearly, Chavez's problem is not one man. It never was. Chavez's anti-Americanism was not the result of his dislike for Bush. Some will say what matters is not the man but his policies. But even that does not tell the whole story.

Some countries and politicians have goals and interests that conflict sharply with the United States. Regardless of how the man in the Oval Office speaks, regardless of how charming he is. And some nations and leaders will define themselves by their anti-Americanism.

Still, the conciliatory tone from President Obama does serve a useful purpose. When Bush was president, it was easy to believe that people like Chavez or regimes such as Iran's acted the way they did because America spoke in tones they found offensive or overly confrontational. Now we know there was more.

Iran's defiance of international demands on its nuclear program are not the product of poor table manners from the Bush administration. Iran behaves as it does because its regime has certain objectives, and its accelerated nuclear enrichment is key to achieving goals such as regional supremacy.

During the Bush years, many believed Iran's intransigence was the direct result of Bush's threatening stance. Since Obama came to power, he has tried unsuccessfully to stop Iran from lying to the U.N.'s nuclear authorities and deceiving the world's diplomats. Iran has dismissed all efforts despite Washington's new conciliatory tone and its efforts to find a diplomatic solution.

It has become more difficult to blame America for the problem. And yet, some will continue to see the devil's shadow and blame the U.S. no matter how much America's president scrubs his foreign policy.

In the case of Iran, America's once-reluctant allies may have learned that the problem was not Washington's tone but Iranian objectives. That may or may not persuade Russia and China to support Western nations' efforts to pressure Iran through economic sanctions. But the truly important product of the new revelations will be found not overseas but inside the White House.

If Obama thought a change of tone would make the world see things America's way, his first year in power has brought a powerful lesson: Sometimes countries disagree simply because their goals are mutually exclusive.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

'Same thing we do every night, Pinky, try to FREE the world!'

The Saipanpreneur Project

Creating economic success for the CNMI

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

I'm currently enjoying a book titled *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* by Jerry Mander. When Mander wrote his book in 1978, there was no CNN, no worldwide Web, no hundreds of cable channels streaming into our homes, no iPods, no Blackberries, and no laptops. However, his insights into how the increasing influence of television is affecting our society in our lives are quite profound.

This isn't a book review, so I'll just state briefly that Mander's four arguments revolve around the effects that television has had on:

1. The critical thinking skills of human beings.
2. Our relationship to natural environments.
3. The physical and mental health of human beings.
4. The knowledge/power balance in a democratic society.

In one section of the book, Mander lays out the pre-conditions that exist(ed)—and to which television has contributed—that have set the stage for the conditions mentioned in the four arguments. In other words, in order to create the deterioration of critical thinking skills, the disconnection with the natural environment, the weakening of physical and mental health, and the drastic imbalance in wealth, knowledge and power in our society, certain things have to be consciously put in place.

He begins, *"Imagine that like some kind of science fiction dictator, you intended to rule the world. You would probably have pinned over your desk a list something like this:"* and he then goes on to list the eight pre-conditions.

Now, anyone (um, like me) who coaches, consults or advises others on starting a business, achieving optimum health, maximizing their creative potential or changing their lives has encountered the mental and emotional blocks that exist in people's self esteem, self perception and awareness, judgment of others, worldview, and belief level that prevent them from setting goals, executing their plans, and moving forward with their lives in ways they desire.

So, as I read each of Mander's eight pre-conditions for total control of the masses, it occurred to me that each thing that television has contributed to mirrors exactly a condition that I encounter among the people I coach. So, rather than repeat the eight pre-conditions here, I'm going to actually write their opposites as a prescription for how to undo the damage that television (and similar technologies) has done.

In other words, to invoke and paraphrase the famous line from the "Pinky and the Brain" cartoon, I'm going to take Mander's list of how to rule the world, and by writing its opposite, show How to Free the World!

1. Increase personal knowledge.

Make it easier for people to know about themselves, how they function, what a human being is, and how the human fits into the wider natural systems of the universe. This will make it possible for the human to recognize what is natural and real from what is artificial and contrived. People can achieve greater control of themselves, their needs, and their health, and find the answers they need on their own without need for so-called experts and authorities from outside themselves. Personal knowledge and experience is the best authority.

2. Encourage comparisons and connections.

Show people how their present lives are connected to earlier societies, older languages, and how it all fits together in historical context. Promote and foster the awareness of and respect for indigenous cultures, natural environments, and other non-human life forms.

When people see themselves in relation to and connected to other systems, they act more responsibly and with a group ethic that benefits the whole world rather than simply the individual.

3. Connect people directly with each other.

Encourage interactive, group experiences where people interact with each other rather than with an external show, presentation of performance. For example, a spectator sport or movie date is not really a group experience because while people *do* gather together, each person is in their own brain, simply sitting and watching something outside of the group. We want interpersonal exchange, not just a mass experience.

4. Encourage sensory experiences.

People need to have more sensory (sight, smell, touch, hearing, taste) experiences rather simply mental experiences. A focus on solely mental experiences separates the mind from the body and makes it harder to remain grounded in reality.

5. Encourage personal experience.

Encourage unique, individualized, experiential experience rather than pre-arranged, edited, crafted experiences. To develop a real understanding of the world, an individual must experience the world for him or herself rather than through the produced, edited show or performance.

6. Discourage drug use and the need to "escape."

The pacifying effects of drug use, tobacco, food and sex nullify the individual's desire and motivation to take the necessary actions to change their situations. However, once many of the previous strategies are implemented, and people feel more connected and personally empowered, this need to escape will decrease.

7. Decentralize sources of information.

In one regard, the Internet is already serving this by creating multiple sources of information that are competing with the traditional sources.

However, many people still receive what they consider to be valid, authentic, and unbiased "news" from single source entities. Information is power. It is also freedom. Once people—through Twitter, and Facebook, and blogs and Web sites—realize that the reality they are fed by the centralized, nightly newscasts is biased and distorted for specific agendas, then they can begin to approach a degree of freedom of thought and action.

8. Redefine happiness and the meaning of life.

As a result of the advertising-driven medium of television and its cousins of radio, print and the Internet, people have developed a skewed definition of happiness. They are taught to have certain needs, taught to connect those needs with what they believe happiness to be, and are encouraged to become obedient consumers in order to satisfy those needs. The purpose of advertising and media is to create consumers who keep the wheels of the economy turning.

It is easy to teach people a skewed definition of happiness if as a result of television, 1. They don't value their own self-acquired knowledge, 2. They see themselves as disconnected from the past and other cultures, 3. They are unconnected from each other, 4. They are deprived of sensory experiences, 5. They get their experience and interpretation of life through third parties (TV anchors, talk show hosts, etc. newspaper editors), 6. They escape into drugs, and 7. All their information comes from a single source.

However, once a person experiences the seven steps to Free The World, it becomes easier to introduce a new definition of happiness and the meaning and purpose of life.

What's needed

What's needed, instead, is:

- a definition of happiness that emphasizes on expansion and growth and the achievement of one's fullest potential.
- a definition of life's purpose that focuses on uplifting and being of service to others.
- a definition of one's profession that is based on the pursuit of one's passion and natural talents.

What's needed is to teach:

- an interaction with oneself that focuses on developing one's creativity.
- an interaction with others that focuses on giving unconditional love.
- an interaction with the environment that is based on stewardship and not exploitation.

When you really think about it, isn't this ideally what our educational system should be doing for our children? Is it not ideally what our careers and jobs should offer us? Is it not ideally what our everyday lives should be all about?

As you go forward with your resolutions and re-commitments to live a more prosperous life for yourself and your children and/or to make a difference in the lives of others, consider how all the definitions, habits, perceptions and opinions we have, have been fed to us all our lives, and consequently how caught up most of us are in an experience that has been created for us, and into which we unwittingly fall. Then, if life seems as if you're a laboratory rat caught in a spinning wheel, with your brain simply reacting to pre-programmed commands, when you interact with your family after work, or your children after school, or simply with yourself, as you unwind from the day's activities, ask yourself (and your brain) seriously, *"What are we doing tonight?"*

■ ■ ■ ■

***Note**: Ever wanted to direct your friends and family to a set of websites that revealed the best things about Saipan? Do what I do: send them to www.bestofsaipan.com!*

■ ■ ■ ■

Note: Fans and followers of the book, *Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin: Diary of a Chinese Garment Factory Girl on Saipan* may now find copies here on Saipan at Fu Dogs & Qi (pronounced chi), Saipan's only Asian Antiques Store, located on the first floor of the Nauru Building (the "360 building") in Susupe.

■ ■ ■ ■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 15 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit*. Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now makes his home here in Saipan. To learn more about the Saipanpreneur Project and Walt's philosophy and formula visit www.saipanpreneur.com and www.passionprofit.com.*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A job well done

This letter is in response to NMC's Senate Ms. Joyce Taro and Miles Rodriguez, president of the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College, the two most important organizations at the college. Our hats off to the two of you for standing up for what is right for NMC. Dr. Carmen Fernandez has shown tremendous respect and professionalism for the college and its students by remaining focused on the most important critical issue such as accreditation, regardless of all the criticism from within and outside the compounds of NMC.

A recent letter to the editor by Mr. Mark Haag, a former faculty member who was at the heart of all the fiasco at NMC, failed to mention that he was the lead person assigned to assemble a team to rescue NMC's accreditation, a lead entrusted by Dr. Fernandez. Instead, this individual chose personal agenda to intentionally derail accreditation efforts and discredit Dr. Fernandez's administration, hoping for her immediate removal as president of NMC by the Board of Regents. Fortunately, such a move did not materialize since all the accusations and allegations of improprieties against the administration had no merit. Mr. Mark Haag also failed to follow NMC's protocol, policies, and procedure when one has a grievance against a staff or faculty, including the president.

I once advised Mr. Haag and the rest of his colleagues during a private gathering at his residence with Mr. Frank Sobolowski, Dr. Debra Cabera, her sister, Wil Castro, and Larry Lee that whenever you accuse someone of something serious, make sure you have your facts readily available. Otherwise you're just shooting yourself in the foot. Instead, they continued their fiascos all throughout the show-cause status on accreditation and in the presence of WASC accreditation team that came on island to visit NMC. If it were not for the strong stance of Dr. Fernandez in staying focused on accreditation, NMC would have not regained its accreditation, which in our view it is a testament to true leadership at NMC and a person who stands by NMC slogan, "Students First"!

As an advocate in our community and a strong supporter of NMC, let us stop the bickering amongst each other and let us continue to give Dr. Fernandez our full support and faith. After all, NMC did regain its accreditation.

By the way, did anyone even bother to check on Mr. Sam McPhetres' health lately? Everyone should be concerned, and yes we should all be thankful for the many years that he taught at NMC for he is one of the founding pioneers of teachers who taught the students of NMC well.

Happy New Year NMC and Biba Dr. Fernandez for a job well done and good luck, Mr. Sam McPhetres.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
President, Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°

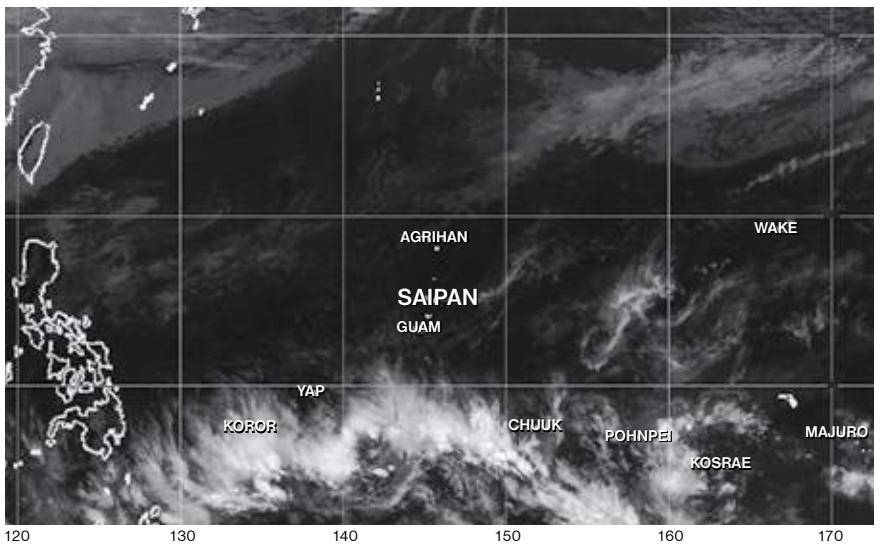
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼76
Palau	Cloudy	▲89	▼78
Yap	Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼78
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼78

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲74	▼61
Beijing	Sunny	▲21	▼ 3
Hong Kong	Showers	▲66	▼63
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼69
London	Flurries	▲36	▼27
Los Angeles	Showers	▲86	▼73
Manila	Showers	▲86	▼73
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲73	▼55
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲63	▼44
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲37	▼26
Osaka	Rain	▲39	▼33
Paris	Flurries	▲29	▼26
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲35	▼17
Rome	Rain	▲54	▼43
Salem	Showers	▲50	▼34
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲59	▼44
Seoul	Sunny	▲19	▼ 7
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲48	▼34
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲35	▼25

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2010

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A frontal boundary enters the discussion area near 25N160E and stretches to 23N163E then continues to a weak circulation located near 25N149E. A cold front extends from the circulation to 20N145E then continues as a shear line to 17N140E and exits the discussion area at 16N130E. Extensive cloud cover and scattered showers are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A dissipating shear line stretches across the Western Pacific from 17N180 to 16N170E to 13N160E to 15N150E through the Marianas near Guam to 10N137E to end near 9N130E. Patchy cloudiness and showers are found along and up to 180 miles north of the shear line. A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 2N130E to a weak circulation near 2N160E to end near EQ163E. Convergence north of the trough is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms 150 miles north and south of a line that stretches from 3N130E to 7N145E to EQ159E. This area covers portions of the Republic of Palau and Yap, Chuuk, and Pohnpei states. A trough of low-pressure is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between Pohnpei and Kosrae between the equator and 8N from 159E to 162E. Trade-wind convergence is generating a thin band of showers 130 miles north and south of a line that stretches from 9N163E to EQ179E. This area south of Kwajalein and Majuro. A weak trade-wind disturbance is bringing clouds and showers to portions of the Marshall Islands near Majuro between 6N and 8N from 171E to 177E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:37 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
12:14 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
6:53 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:02 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:31 AM	10:54 PM
Thursday		11:35 PM
Friday	12:26 AM	12:17 PM
Saturday	1:20 AM	12:17 PM
Sunday	2:15 AM	1:01 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 22, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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Business

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

	AUSTRALIA 4,939.50 Up 49.70 (+1.02%)		
HONG KONG 22,238.85 Up 415.57 (+1.90%)		JAKARTA 2,600.71 Up 25.30 (+0.98%)	
TOKYO 10,681.83 Up 27.04 (+0.25%)		K. LUMPUR 1,288.44 Up 12.69 (+0.99%)	
MANILA 3,028.46 Up 23.45 (+0.78%)		SINGAPORE 2,918.67 Up 24.12 (+0.83%)	
SEOUL 1,690.62 Dowm 5.52 (-0.33%)		BANGKOK 736.22 Up 3.94 (+0.54%)	

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 10,583.96 +1.50%

S&P 1,132.99 +1.60%

NASDAQ 2,302.42 +1.73%

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.0941
British Pound	0.6206
Canadian Dollar	1.0382
Chinese Yuan	6.8320
Euro	0.6920
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7566
Indian Rupee	46.2020
Indonesian Rupiah	9,295.0000
Japanese Yen	91.7750
Malaysian Ringgit	3.3815
New Zealand Dollar	1.3620
Philippine Peso	45.8750
Singapore Dollar	1.3944
South Korean Won	1,149.0000
Swiss Franc	1.0280
Taiwan Dollar	31.8350
Thailand Baht	33.1300

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Dubai opens half-mile-high tower, world's tallest

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Dubai opened the world's tallest skyscraper Monday in a blaze of fireworks, then added a final flourish: It renamed the half-mile-high tower for the head of neighboring Abu Dhabi, whose billions bailed out Dubai amid last year's financial crisis.

Long known as Burj Dubai—Arabic for "Dubai Tower"—the building rises 2,717 feet (828 meters) from the desert. The $1.5 billion "vertical city" of luxury apartments and offices and a hotel designed by Giorgio Armani also plans to have the world's highest mosque (158th floor) and swimming pool (76th floor).

Its backers wanted the skyscraper to be a monument to the boundless, can-do spirit of Dubai—one of a federation of seven small sheikdoms that make up the United Arab Emirates—but the timing could not be worse. Property prices in parts of Dubai collapsed by nearly half in the past year, the result of easy credit and overbuilding during a real estate bubble that has since burst.

Riding to the rescue was Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the ruler of oil-rich neighbor Abu Dhabi, which pumped tens of billions of dollars into Dubai last year as it struggled to pay enormous debts.

AP

The Burj Khalifa , the world's 828 meter tallest building is illuminated during the official opening ceremony in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010.

As officials opened the tapering metal-and-glass spire with fireworks and multicolored lights, they unexpectedly announced it would be renamed Burj Khalifa, to honor the Abu Dhabi leader who is also president of the UAE.

Thousands of cheering, clapping spectators watched as a tally projected on huge screens at the opening ceremony revealed the tower's most closely guarded secret—its height of 2,717 feet. That made it more than 1,000 feet higher than the skyscraper known as Taipei 101 in Taiwan, which at 1,667 feet had been the world's tallest since 2004.

The tallest building in the United States, the Willis Tower in Chicago, comes in at 1,451 feet, although with its spire it measures 1,729 feet and would be considered even taller than Taipei 101. Before they were destroyed in the Sept, 11, 2001, attacks, the World Trade Center towers both topped 1,360 feet. The Freedom Tower being planned for the site will measure 1,776 feet, with completion estimated in 2013.

The exact number of floors for the Burj Khalifa is not known, and could reflect how the developer chose to calculate the total.

Mohammed Alabbar, chairman of the tower's developer Emaar Properties, initially said Monday it had "more than 200" stories, but he later backtracked to more than 165 inhabitable floors, given its tapered top. Promotional materials sent before the tower's opening said it contained 160 stories.

Developers say they are confident in the safety of the tower, which is nearly twice the height of New York's Empire State Building.

Greg Sang, Emaar's director of projects, said the Burj Khalifa has "refuge floors" at 25 to 30 story intervals that are more fire resistant and have separate air supplies in case of emergency. Its reinforced concrete structure, he said, makes it stronger than steel-frame skyscrapers.

"A plane won't be able to slice through the Burj like it did through the steel columns of the World Trade Center," he said.

Dubai has not been a target of terrorist attacks or threats that have been made public.

The tower was designed by Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, which has a long track record in engineering some of the world's tallest buildings, including the Willis Tower.

Ahmed Elghazouli, a professor of structural engineering at Imperial College London who was not involved with the Burj's construction, said such groundbreaking buildings typically employ some of the world's best engineers, and go through more rigorous testing and require more studies during design than standard towers.

Americans' job satisfaction falls to record low

WASHINGTON (AP)—We can't get no job satisfaction.

Even Americans who are lucky enough to have work in this economy are becoming more unhappy with their jobs, according to a new survey that found only 45 percent of Americans are satisfied with their work.

That was the lowest level ever recorded by the Conference Board research group in more than 22 years of studying the issue. In 2008, 49 percent of those surveyed reported satisfaction with their jobs.

The drop in workers' happiness can be partly blamed on the worst recession since the 1930s, which made it difficult for some people to find challenging and suitable jobs. But worker dissatisfaction has been on the rise for more than two decades.

"It says something troubling about work in America. It is not about the business cycle or one grumpy generation," says Linda Barrington, managing director of human capital at the Conference Board, who helped write the report, which was released Tuesday.

Workers have grown steadily more unhappy for a variety of reasons:

- Fewer workers consider their jobs to be interesting.
- Incomes have not kept up with inflation.
- The soaring cost of health insurance has eaten into workers' take-home pay.

If the job satisfaction trend is not reversed, economists say, it could stifle innovation and hurt America's competitiveness and productivity. And it could make unhappy older workers less inclined to take the time to share their knowledge and skills with younger workers.

Nate Carrasco, 26, of Odessa, Texas, says he's been pretty unhappy in most of his jobs, including his current one at an auto parts store.

"There is no sense of teamwork in most places any more," Carrasco gripes.

When the Conference Board's first survey was conducted in 1987, most workers—61 percent—said they were happy in their jobs. The survey of 5,000 households was conducted for the Conference Board by TNS, a global market research company.

US health spending grew to $2.3 trillion in 2008

WASHINGTON (AP)—The recession dramatically slowed U.S. health care spending to $2.3 trillion in 2008, but it still grew much faster than the economy as a whole, accounting for more than 16 percent of the nation's economic output, says a new federal analysis.

The eye-popping figure of $2.3 trillion—that's $7,681 per person—underscores the challenges confronting President Barack Obama and lawmakers seeking to overhaul the system. Obama has repeatedly cited spiraling health costs as one of the main reasons Congress needs to pass his health plan, and administration officials said the findings highlighted the need for quick action.

"This report contains some welcome news and yet another warning sign," said Jonathan Blum, a top official at the government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "Health care spending as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) is rising at an unsustainable rate. It is clear that we need health insurance reform now."

However, health care experts question whether there are significant cost-containment measures in the legislation passed by House and Senate Democrats before Christmas - and Republicans insist there aren't. The new report could provide fodder for both sides as lawmakers work to reconcile the House and Senate legislation into a final bill in coming weeks.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil rises to near $82 on stocks, cold weather

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil rose to near $82 a barrel Tuesday in Asia after a jump in U.S. stock markets boosted investor confidence and helped extend a four-week rally in crude prices. Benchmark crude for February delivery was up 31 cents to $81.81 a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract climbed $2.15 to settle at $81.51 on Monday. Oil traders often look to stock markets as a measure of overall investor sentiment, and equities rose in the first trading day of 2010 as investors eyed signs of improvement in U.S. and Chinese manufacturing.

Top GM lobbyist to step down in DC office shake-up

WASHINGTON (AP)—The top lobbyist at General Motors Co. will retire next year and will be replaced by a former lobbyist at AT&T in a shake-up at the automaker's Washington office. Ken Cole, who has been GM's vice president for government relations and public policy since 2001, will step down Jan. 1 and will remain as an adviser for several months until permanently retiring early next year, the company said Wednesday. He will be replaced by Robert E. Ferguson, a senior strategist at the Texas PR firm Public Strategies Inc. and a former lobbyist at AT&T Inc., the telecommunications giant once run by current GM Chairman and CEO Ed Whitacre Jr.

Tax preparers to face new regulation, IRS scrutiny

WASHINGTON (AP)—The IRS plans to require tax preparers to pass a test and register with the government to better police a largely unregulated industry used by most taxpayers. The Internal Revenue Service says there could be more than a million people offering tax preparation services. Most offer sound advice, IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman says, but many don't and the agency knows little about them. The new regulations, announced Monday, won't be in effect for the current filing season—individual tax returns are due April 15. But Shulman said tax preparers will be held to higher standards in future years as the IRS steps up its oversight to help reduce fraud and errors.

Nation

2 dead in Las Vegas federal building shootout

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A gunman who opened fire with a shotgun at a federal building Monday, killing one security guard and wounding a U.S. marshal before he was shot to death, was upset over losing a lawsuit over his Social Security benefits, law enforcement officials told The Associated Press.

The two officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the case, said 66-year-old Johnny Lee Wicks opened fire with a shotgun at a security checkpoint, touching off a gunbattle with deputy U.S. marshals.

Although the investigation is continuing, the officials said preliminary evidence pointed to Wicks' anger over his benefits case as the motive for the shooting.

Authorities also were investigating the cause of a fire that damaged Wicks' modest one-bedroom apartment in a 90-unit seniors complex three miles northwest of the scene of the shooting.

"There was a fire at his apartment this morning," FBI Special Agent Joseph Dickey said as investigators pieced together a motive for the shooting and retraced Wicks' steps.

A neighbor, Johnetta Watkins, said she didn't see Wicks after firefighters doused the fire.

Police tape closes Las Vegas Blvd. near the federal building in Las Vegas, Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. AP

Watkins, 56, used to drive Wicks to the grocery store. She described him as a quiet man who walked with a limp, lived alone and sometimes complained that Las Vegas was a "prejudiced" place to live. He also complained about what he called an unfair cut in his Social Security benefits, she said.

The gunman opened fire at the courthouse at about 8 a.m. Gunfire lasted several minutes, with shots echoing around tall buildings in the area more than a mile north of the Las Vegas Strip.

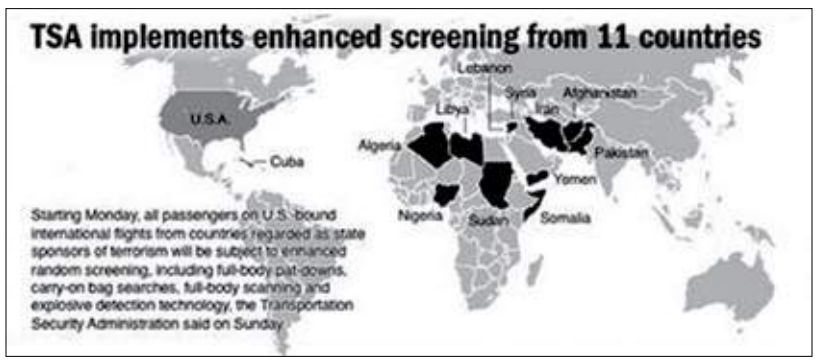
Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who was in Las Vegas but not at his local office in the building, said one of his aides bent down to pick up some newspapers in the atrium when the shooting began.

Watch lists grow; Obama to meet with security team

WASHINGTON (AP)—The government has added dozens of people to the ominous lists of suspected terrorists and those barred from U.S.-bound flights, a crackdown that comes as President Barack Obama is poised to announce changes to the nation's watchlists.

At the White House on Tuesday, Obama will speak in fresh detail about the findings of the urgent, sprawling reviews he ordered of how the government screens airline passengers and how it works to detect and track possible terrorists. Obama's remarks, to come after his meeting with top security and intelligence officials, will outline steps designed to strengthen the watchlisting effort and to thwart future terrorists attacks, the White House said.

The move comes after what officials call a botched effort by a Nigerian man to blow up an airliner over Detroit on Christmas, one that exposed cracks in the nation's security system, which is built upon the ability of agencies to share information and connect dots.


TSA implements enhanced screening from 11 countries
Lebanon
Syria
Afghanistan
Libya
Iran
U.S.A.
Cuba
Algeria
Pakistan
Yemen
Nigeria
Sudan
Somalia
Starting Monday, all passengers on U.S.-bound international flights from countries regarded as state sponsors of terrorism will be subject to enhanced random screening, including full-body pat-downs, carry-on bag searches, full-body scanning and explosive detection technology, the Transportation Security Administration said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, people flying to the U.S. from overseas will continue to see enhanced security. The Transportation Security Administration has directed airlines to give full-body pat-downs to U.S.-bound travelers from Yemen, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and 11 other countries the U.S. believes have terrorism activity—a move criticized by one Muslim advocacy group.

The addition of more names to the government's terrorist watch and no-fly lists came after U.S. officials closely scrutinized a larger database of suspected terrorists, an intelligence official said Monday. People on the watch list get additional checking before they are allowed to enter this country; those on the no-fly list are barred from boarding aircraft in or headed for the United States.

A 23-year-old Nigerian man who claimed ties to al-Qaida was charged Dec. 26 with trying to destroy a Detroit-bound airliner as it approached the airport. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab is alleged to have sneaked an explosive device onto the plane and then set it off, sparking a fire but not the intended mass explosion.

Abdulmutallab's name was in the government's database of about 550,000 people suspected of having terrorism ties. But it wasn't on a list requiring him to pass through additional security screening or keep him from flying to the U.S.

Dems intend to bypass GOP on health compromise

WASHINGTON (AP)—House and Senate Democrats intend to bypass traditional procedures when they negotiate a final compromise on health care legislation, officials said Monday, a move that will exclude Republican lawmakers and reduce their ability to delay or force politically troubling votes in both houses.

The unofficial timetable calls for final passage of the measure to remake the nation's health care system by the time President Barack Obama delivers his State of the Union address, probably in early February.

Democratic aides said the final compromise talks would essentially be a three-way negotiation involving top Democrats in the House and Senate and the White House, a structure that gives unusual latitude to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada and Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California.

These officials said there are no plans to appoint a formal House-Senate conference committee, the method Congress most often uses to reconcile differing bills. Under that customary format, a committee chairman is appointed to preside, and other senior lawmakers from both parties and houses participate in typically perfunctory public meetings while the meaningful negotiations occur behind closed doors.

In this case, the plan is to skip the formal meetings, reach an agreement, then have the two houses vote as quickly as possible. A 60-vote Senate majority would be required in advance of final passage.

"I look forward to working with members of the House, the Senate and President Obama to reconcile our bills and send the final legislation to the president's desk as soon as possible," Pelosi said late last year as the Senate approved its version of the legislation.

Winter system drops record snow, chills the South

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—A bitter chill has settled in across the eastern half of the country, threatening crops, closing schools and making Charleston, S.C., feel more like New York City.

Records snows were reported over the weekend in Vermont, and farmers in Florida scrambled Monday to save strawberries and tomatoes.

The deep freeze will last for at least the rest of the week. The National Weather Service said the mercury could fall below zero in St. Louis later this week for the first time since 1999.

In Burlington, Vt., a weekend snowstorm dumped more than 33 inches, breaking a single-storm record of nearly 30 inches set in 1969.

Most took it in stride, but some took it too far: Vermont State Police cited a man after stopping him pulling a sled—with a rider in it—behind his car on Interstate 89 on Sunday. He was cited for driving with a suspended license.

It was a similar scene in upstate New York, where so-called "lake effect snow" blanketed parts of the state with more than 3 feet.

In Maine, the search continued for an 18-year-old snowmobiler who disappeared shortly after the storm started Friday night, and a small plane crashed into a river channel there Monday after reporting ice buildup on the wings.

The weather caused hundreds of school closings and delays in Arkansas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and the North Carolina mountains.

In Nashville, Tenn., where the overnight low was 12 degrees, police believe an 81-year-old man with Alzheimer's Disease wandered outside in his bathrobe and froze to death, The Tennessean reported. His body was found early Monday.

ACROSS THE NATION

Mo. trucker's sons charged in slaying of Ohio man

MEXICO, Mo. (AP)—Two more teenage sons of a Missouri truck driver have been charged in the death of a man found in the refrigerated compartment of their father's tractor-trailer. Juvenile officials said Monday that the boys, ages 16 and 14, face charges of first-degree murder, kidnapping, armed criminal action and felonious restraint. The charges were filed last month. Six other people also have been charged in the death of 20-year-old James William Boyd McNeely, including their father, Chester Harvey Jr., 38, and another son, Chad Harvey, 19.

State board accuses octuplet doctor of negligence

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The California Medical Board is accusing a fertility doctor of negligence and violating professional guidelines in the case of a woman who conceived octuplets. The state licensing body said Monday that Beverly Hills fertility doctor Michael Kamrava acted beyond the reasonable judgment of a treating physician by repeatedly providing fertility treatment to a woman identified only by her initials "N.S" in the documents. Nadya Suleman previously identified Kamrava as her doctor. The documents say his patient became pregnant with octuplets. Suleman gave birth to the world's longest living set of octuplets on Jan. 26, 2008. She already had six other children. No hearing date has been set on the medical board case.

Police: Man locks up grandma to shoot fireworks

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—Authorities are accusing a man of locking up his sickly 86-year-old grandmother on New Year's Day so he could go outside and light off fireworks. According to a criminal complaint, the 21-year-old locked his grandmother in her room about 15 minutes before midnight. The woman is on oxygen and has to take medication regularly for a congenital heart disease, but both the machine and medicine were located in the kitchen. The woman had to call police from a life alert system inside her bedroom because Leder allegedly wouldn't let her out. The man was charged with false imprisonment.

Manhattan's new top prosecutor promises humility

NEW YORK (AP)—Manhattan's first new district attorney in 35 years says he'll balance public safety with fairness as he takes over one of the nation's most prominent prosecutor's jobs, which served as a model for television's "Law & Order." Cyrus R. Vance Jr. pledged at Monday's swearing-in to use "our immense power as prosecutors with humility." Vance heads an office known for pursuing cases ranging from corporate corruption to celebrity misbehavior. In the last four months, the office has charged a TV producer with trying to blackmail David Letterman, reached a plea deal with rapper Lil Wayne in a gun possession case and put "Spider-Man" actress Kirsten Dunst on the witness stand in a trial involving the theft of her $2,000 handbag.

Asia

Suspect in RP massacre pleads not guilty

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The scion of a powerful political clan accused of leading last year's massacre of 57 journalists and members of a rival's family pleaded not guilty Tuesday on the first day of his trial.

Andal Ampatuan Jr., a town mayor in southern Maguindanao province, has been initially charged with 41 counts of murder in the Nov. 23 attack on an election caravan, the worst political violence in the country.

He entered a plea of not guilty as his trial got under way under tight security in the national police headquarters.

Prosecutors said they have witnesses who will testify that Ampatuan led more than 100 government-armed militiamen and police in stopping the caravan at a security checkpoint outside Ampatuan township then forcing the victims at gunpoint to a hilltop clearing where they were gunned down, hacked and buried in mass graves.

Among those killed were at least 30 journalists and their staff in what is considered the world's deadliest single attack on media workers. The carnage has sparked international outrage, prompting President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to briefly impose martial law in Maguindanao to crack down on the powerful Ampatuan clan, a key political ally, and its private army.

AP

Andal Ampatuan Jr., center, the prime suspect in the massacre of 57 people, including 30 journalists and staff, in Maguindanao in southern Philippines last Nov. 23, 2009, is escorted into the courtroom at the heavily-guarded Philippine National Police headquarters at Manila's Quezon city, Tuesday Jan. 5, 2010 in the Philippines.

Ampatuan's father, the former provincial governor who heads the clan, and several other close relatives also have been accused of involvement in the killings but have yet to be indicted. They too have denied any role in the massacre.

The victims included the family and supporters of the Ampatuans' election rival, Esmael Mangudadatu, who sent his wife, sisters and other female relatives to file his candidacy papers hoping they would not be harmed. Mangudadatu said Ampatuan had threatened to kill him if he ran for governor in national elections in May.

Arroyo's political backing of the warlord clan, which helped her win crucial votes during the 2004 elections, has allowed the Ampatuans to flourish dangerously for years in Maguindanao, a predominantly Muslim province about 560 miles (900 kilometers) south of Manila, the International Crisis Group, a prominent think tank, said last month.

Arroyo's aides have acknowledged her close alliance with the Ampatuans but said that did not authorize them to commit the crime. The Ampatuans were expelled from Arroyo's ruling party after the killings.

The hearing was adjourned until Jan. 13, when Ampatuan's lawyer Sigfrid Fortun said he would ask for his client to be released on bail. Although murder is a nonbailable offense, Fortun said the evidence against Ampatuan was fabricated by his political rivals.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Malaysia appeals 'Allah' for Christians ruling

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's government filed an appeal Monday to fight a court ruling that allowed non-Muslims to use the word "Allah" to refer to God, a decision that triggered protests in the Muslim-majority country. The government says Allah is an Islamic word and its use by others would mislead Muslims, implying it could be used to convert them to other religions. Allah, an Arabic word, predates Islam and is used by Arabic-speaking Christians in places such as Egypt and Syria. Protests by Muslim groups, although peaceful, have raised fears of friction between the Malay Muslim majority and the large ethnic Chinese and Indian minorities, who mainly practice Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Pandas headed to Shanghai for 2010 Expo

BEIJING (AP)—Ten giant panda cubs, all born after the deadly earthquake that hit China's Sichuan province in 2008, were on their way Tuesday to Shanghai to go on display during this year's World Expo, a zoo official said. Six female and four male pandas from the Wolong Giant Panda Reserve Center in Sichuan were to arrive Tuesday evening to spend six months at the Shanghai Zoo and then six months at the Shanghai Wildlife Zoo, said a spokeswoman for the Shanghai Zoo. Like many Chinese officials, she would give only her surname, Tan. All 10 of the pandas were born at Wolong after a massive earthquake struck Sichuan in May 2008, showing that the breeding process there is back on track after the reserve was nearly destroyed. The quake killed or left missing nearly 90,000 people.

Tajikistan quake damage less serious than thought

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (AP)—Tajik officials say that damage from a recent earthquake isn't as serious as previously thought. An emergency agency said initially that no deaths were reported but about 20,000 people were left homeless by Saturday's quake that hit the impoverished Central Asian nation. The 5.3-magnitude quake struck the Pamir Mountains. But emergency official Munira Nazariyeva said Monday that onsite inspections revealed that only 783 people were left homeless. She said 98 houses were completely destroyed and nearly 1,000 others damaged by the quake that hit several villages in the Gorno-Badakhshansky region. Earlier official statements said that about 1,000 homes had been destroyed.

5 US suspects in Pakistan defend 'jihad' plans

SARGODHA, Pakistan (AP)—Five Americans detained in Pakistan told a court Monday they intended to cross the border into Afghanistan to wage jihad against Western forces but denied any links to al-Qaida or plans to carry out terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

The admission could be a prelude to possible U.S. conspiracy charges but might also draw sympathy from an increasingly anti-American Pakistani public. Such feelings have complicated U.S. efforts to persuade Pakistan to do more to crack down on militants carrying out cross-border attacks on coalition troops in Afghanistan.

"We are not terrorists," one of the five men, Ramy Zamzam, told The Associated Press as he entered the courtroom in the eastern Pakistani city of Sargodha, where they were arrested in December.

"We are jihadists, and jihad is not terrorism," said Zamzam, a 22-year-old Egyptian American who was a dental student at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Jihad has several different meanings in Islam, but Zamzam seemed to be referring to the duty to fight against foreign forces viewed as occupying a Muslim country.

Zamzam and another member of the group, Ethiopian American Ahmed Minni, insisted the men had no links with al-Qaida and were focused only on Afghanistan, according to court documents.

"They said that they only intended to travel to Afghanistan to help their Muslim brothers who are in trouble, who are bleeding and who are being victimized by Western forces," said the group's lawyer, Ameer Abdullah Rokhri.

It was the first time the men, aged 19 to 25 and all from the Washington area, have addressed a court since their arrest. They arrived wearing a mix of Western clothes, such as jeans and tracksuits, and traditional shalwar kameez robes. They were handcuffed as they entered and exited the hearing, which was closed to media. A couple of them laughed and smiled as they left.

Pakistani police have not filed formal charges but say they plan to seek life sentences under the country's anti-terrorism law.

"We have told the court that police have completed their investigation and have enough evidence against the five suspects to try them under anti-terrorism law," said police officer Matiullah Shahani.

The court remanded the men to prison for 14 days Monday to give police time to prepare the case.

Seoul buried in heaviest snowfall in 70 years

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Seoul residents slogged through the heaviest snowfall in modern Korean history after a winter storm dumped more than 11 inches (28 centimeters) Monday, forcing airports to cancel flights and paralyzing traffic in South Korea's bustling capital.

The snow and icy roads snarled traffic in and out of Seoul, and at least three people died in traffic accidents. Many commuters squeezed into packed subways to get to work, and a Cabinet meeting was delayed because ministers were stuck in traffic.

The snowfall, which continued through Monday afternoon, was the heaviest in a single day since Korea began conducting meteorological surveys in 1937, the state weather agency said.

Gimpo International Airport in western Seoul canceled 224 flights before resuming service Monday afternoon when the snowfall stopped, airport official Choi Choon-ja said.

More than 20 flights between Incheon International Airport, just west of Seoul, to cities in China also coping with snowfall were canceled. More than 100 flights to other regions were delayed, Incheon airport official Kang Soo-kyung said.

In southern South Korea, three people were killed in a traffic accident blamed on icy roads, according to the Yonhap news agency. However, officials said no deaths or serious property damage was directly related to the heavy snowfall.

Chinese underground bishop Yao dies at 87

BEIJING (AP)—Leon Yao Liang, a bishop in China's underground church who was imprisoned for more than 28 years under the communists, has died, a U.S.-based Catholic group reported Monday. He was 87.

Yao died on Wednesday in the northern township of Xiwanzi, where he had been auxiliary bishop since 2002, the Cardinal Kung Foundation said in an e-mail.

Yao had held the position in defiance of the government-sanctioned Patriotic Catholic Association, which has no official relations with the Vatican and does not recognize the pope's right to appoint bishops.

Born in a farming village in the northern province of Hebei in 1923, Yao was ordained a priest in 1946 and assigned as assistant pastor, said the Kung foundation, based in Stamford, Connecticut.

Yao's religious activities came under increasing restrictions after the 1949 seizure of power by the officially atheistic Communist Party, which reviled Catholicism both as a religion and as a reminder of China's past weakness in the face of expansionist European powers.

As the political climate worsened, Yao was forced into a labor camp in 1956, and two years later, sentenced to life imprisonment for refusing to renounce his loyalty to Rome, the foundation said.

World

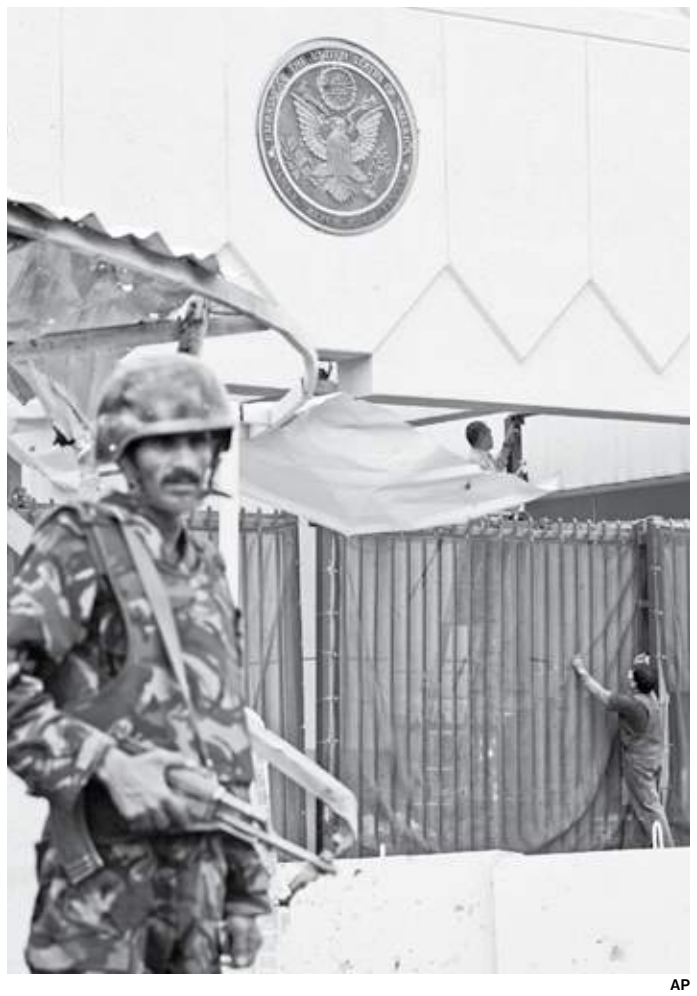
US takes risk on Yemen president to fight al-Qaida

SAN'A, Yemen (AP)—Yemeni security forces clashed with al-Qaida fighters Monday, killing two, the latest sign the embattled, longtime president is making good on vows that his country will cooperate with the United States in fighting the terror network.

Washington is embracing Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh in the battle against al-Qaida's offshoot here, but it may be making a risky bet. The mercurial Saleh has held onto power for 31 years in this fragmented nation by relying on a system of manipulation—centralizing power within his family while buying off rivals and unruly tribesmen, Yemeni and American observers say.

At times, that has meant forging alliances with Islamic extremists, and Saleh has frustrated U.S. officials in recent years by freeing jailed al-Qaida figures on promises they would not engage in terrorism. Several top militants have since broken those promises.

Observers warn that Saleh's rule is buckling under the weight of multiple crises, deep poverty and widespread corruption. The government has full control only around the capital, leaving much of the mountainous nation to heavily armed tribes, some of which have given refuge to al-Qaida fighters.



AP

A Yemeni soldier stands guard in front of the main entrance of the US Embassy while two workers repair the gate in the background, in the capital San'a, Yemen, in this Sept. 18, 2008 file photo.

"Saleh is facing the most difficult time of his presidency," said Ali Seif Hassan, director of a Yemeni organization that mediates government-opposition dialogue.

"Now he faces the decision whether to keep going as he has, all the way to becoming a failed state, or to make the hard choices to avoid that," he said.

For the U.S., the situation raises parallels with Iraq and Afghanistan, where Washington has had to go beyond military action to infuse economic help while pushing political reform on sometimes reluctant political leaders in hopes of undermining support for militants.

With an injection of U.S. counterterror aid and help for its security forces, Yemen's government has vowed in recent weeks to work with the U.S. in stamping out the estimated hundreds of al-Qaida fighters who have built up strongholds in the country's remote regions. Last month, with U.S. help, it carried out its heaviest strikes in years against al-Qaida hideouts, claiming to have killed 30 militants.

The renewed determination brought praise Monday from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. "The United States commends Yemen for the recent actions it has taken to disrupt (al-Qaida) networks and we are reiterating our commitment to assist in those efforts," she said.

In Monday's clashes, Yemeni security forces attacked a group of al-Qaida militants moving through the mountainous area of Arhab, northeast of the capital, security officials said.

Among them was Nazeeh al-Hanaq, a senior figure on Yemen's most wanted list. He escaped, but two fighters with him were killed, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press.

Britain says it passed airliner suspect data to US

LONDON (AP)—British intelligence passed on to U.S. authorities information about a Nigerian accused of trying to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner but he was not singled out as a particular risk, Prime Minister Gordon Brown's office said Monday.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's name was included in a dossier of people who made contact with known extremists in the United Kingdom but officials believe he was radicalized after he left the country in 2008, according to Brown's spokesman, Simon Lewis.

The disclosure came a day after British security officials said they were aware that Abdulmutallab was in contact with known radicals shortly after he came to the U.K. in 2005 but did not consider him a sufficient threat to single him out and alert U.S. authorities.

Investigators say Abdulmutallab, a 23-year-old Nigerian who studied in engineering in London and later went to Yemen, sneaked an explosive device aboard his Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day but was not able to ignite it as planned.

A U.S. counterterrorism official said Monday the British government did not provide material on Abdulmutallab that could be termed a "smoking gun"—meaning, information that would have alerted authorities to the bomb plot. The official declined to be named because he was not authorized to comment on the matter publicly.

President Barack Obama has said there was a systemic failure to prevent the attack and ordered a thorough review of security shortcomings. The president has summoned Homeland Security officials to meet with him in the White House on Tuesday.

"Clearly there was security information about this individual's activities, and that was information that was shared with the U.S. authorities," Lewis said. "That is the key point."

Downing Street would not immediately give any other specific details, including when the information was shared with U.S. authorities.

AP sources: Bomber at CIA base was from Jordan

WASHINGTON (AP)—The suicide bomber who killed eight people inside a CIA base in eastern Afghanistan last week was a Jordanian doctor recruited by Jordanian intelligence, a former senior U.S. intelligence official and a foreign government official confirmed Monday.

The bombing killed seven CIA employees- four officers and three contracted security guards- and a Jordanian intelligence officer, Ali bin Zaid, according to a second former U.S. intelligence official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the incident.

The former senior intelligence official and the foreign official said the bomber was Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi, a 36-year old doctor from Zarqa, Jordan. NBC News first reported the bomber's identity.

He was arrested more than a year ago by Jordanian intelligence and was thought to have been persuaded to support U.S. and Jordanian efforts against al-Qaida, according to the NBC report. He was invited to Camp Chapman, a tightly secured CIA forward base in Khost province on the fractious Afghan-Pakistan frontier, because he was offering urgent information to track down Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's right-hand man.

Hajj Yacoub, a self-proclaimed spokesman for the Taliban in Pakistan, identified the bomber on Muslim militant Web sites as Hammam Khalil Mohammed, also known as Abu-Dujana al-Khurasani. There was no independent confirmation of Yacoub's statement.

Al-Balawi was not searched for bombs when he got onto Camp Chapman, according to both former officials and a current intelligence official.

He detonated the explosive shortly after his debriefing began, according to one of the former intelligence officials. In addition to the eight dead, there were at least six wounded, according to the CIA.

The former senior intelligence official said one of the big unanswered questions is why so many people were present for the debriefing—the interview of the source—when the explosive was detonated.

A half-dozen former CIA officers told The Associated Press that in most cases, only one or two agency officers would typically meet with a possible informant along with an interpreter. Such small meetings would normally be used to limit the danger and the possible exposure of the identities of both officers and informants.

WORLD BRIEFS

Tehran professors denounce violence on protesters

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Nearly 90 professors at Tehran University have told Iran's supreme leader that ongoing violence against protesters shows the weakness of the country's leadership, a pro-reform Web site reported Monday, reflecting a growing willingness to risk careers and studies to challenge the ruling clerics. The current rumblings from universities highlight the evolution of the opposition movement. What began as raw and angry voter backlash after last June's disputed presidential election has moved to a possibly deeper and more ingrained fight against Iran's Islamic leaders. The letter signed by the 88 instructors was issued as university students around Iran staged acts of defiance—including hunger strikes and exam boycotts—to protest reported arrests and intimidation by hard-line forces, according to witnesses and reformist Web sites.

Swiss avalanches kill 5; 3 missing beneath snow

GENEVA (AP)—Avalanches killed five people in the Swiss Alps over the weekend, and bad weather prevented rescuers from reaching three skiers who apparently remained trapped under the snow on Monday, officials said. Two of the avalanches occurred in central Switzerland on Sunday, the first hitting a group of skiers, the second the rescuers who came to their aid. A third avalanche buried two skiers in southern Switzerland. Bad weather conditions meant rescuers had to call off foot and helicopter searches in central Switzerland on Monday for two Swiss and a German missing in the Diemtig Valley, 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of the capital, Bern, said regional police chief Otto von Almen.

Poachers kill rare white rhino in Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—A group of poachers have killed a southern white rhino, an endangered species whose worldwide population is estimated at just 17,500, the head of Kenya's wildlife conservation agency said on Monday. The poachers killed the rhino in a privately owned ranch in central Kenya on Dec. 28 and cut off its horns, said Julius Kipng'etich, the director of the Kenya Wildlife Service. Kenya Wildlife Service rangers tracked down the suspected poachers and suspected buyers on Sunday and caught them with two rhino horns weighing more than 7 kilograms (16 pounds) and 647,000 Kenyan shillings ($8,500) in cash, which is believed to be part of the money the poachers were paid for the horns, Kipng'etich told journalists.

Hamas leader claims progress in Palestinian talks

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—The leader of Hamas said Sunday that significant progress has been made in Egyptian-sponsored talks aimed at reconciling his militant Palestinian group with the rival Fatah movement.

The two main Palestinian factions have been bitterly divided since Hamas violently seized control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, leaving Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah in control only of the West Bank.

The split has complicated peace efforts with Israel as well as reconstruction of the impoverished and war-damaged Gaza Strip. Efforts to bring them together in a power-sharing arrangement failed and the Egyptian-mediated talks are now aimed at ending the division by holding new Palestinian elections.

Khaled Mashaal, who is based in Damascus, Syria, said Hamas still has reservations over the latest Egyptian proposal, which calls for presidential and legislative elections in the first half of this year as well as a reorganization of the security forces under Abbas' authority. He did not elaborate.

Hamas and seven other radical, Damascus-based Palestinian factions have rejected the proposal because it does not state that Palestinians have the right to keep fighting Israel. Fatah, which favors negotiations with Israel, has accepted the Egyptian plan.

"We have made big strides in the Palestinian-Palestinian negotiations and talks that have taken place in Cairo," Mashaal said.

Campus Life

Online, for-profit schools making money from military

By DANIEL GOLDEN
(C) 2009, BLOOMBERG NEWS

BOSTON—Corporal James Long knows he's enrolled at Ashford University, one of at least a dozen for- profit colleges making money off active-duty military with subsidies from American taxpayers. He just can't remember what course he's taking.

The 22-year-old Marine from Dalton, Ga., suffered a brain injury that impaired his ability to concentrate when artillery shells hit his Humvee in Iraq in 2006, he said. Long signed up for the online college, a unit of Bridgepoint Education Inc., after its recruiter gave a sales pitch this year at a barracks for wounded Marines at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Under base rules, the barracks are off-limits to college recruiters, said Robert Songer, director of lifelong learning at Lejeune.

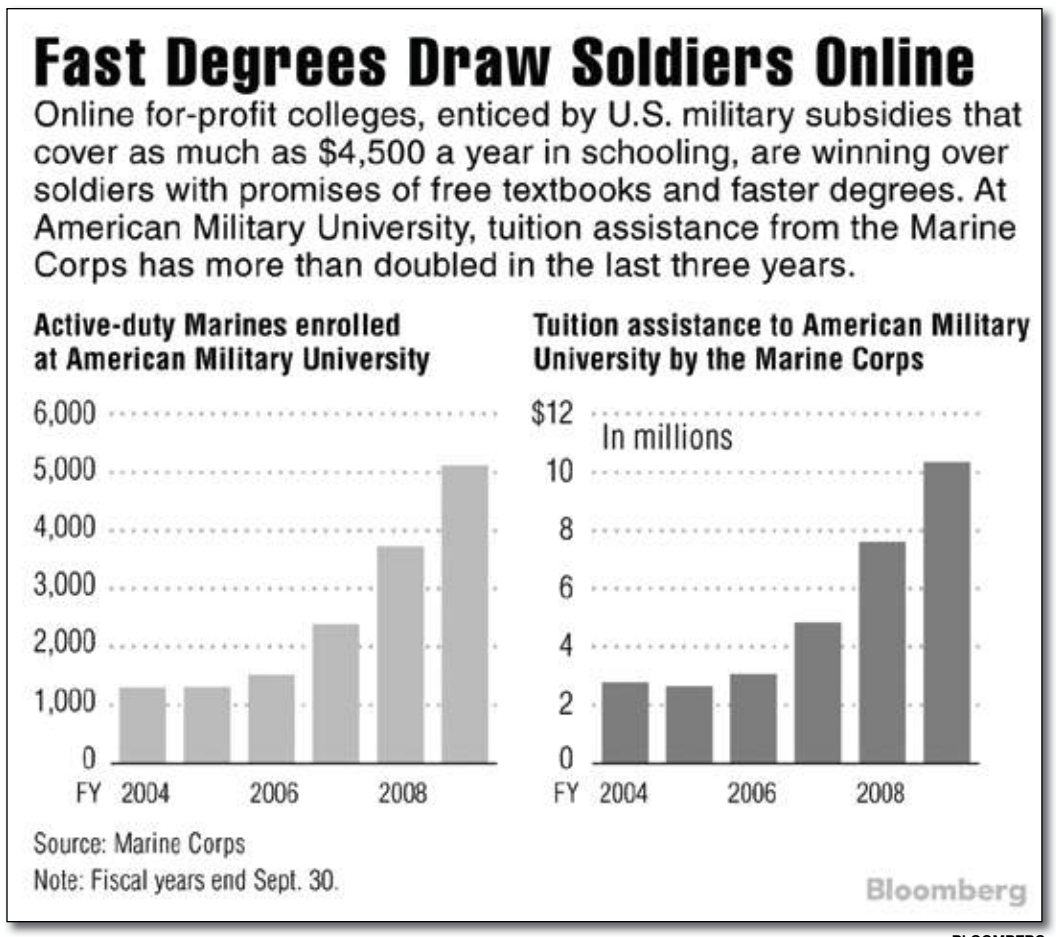
For-profit online colleges, lured to the U.S. military by a Defense Department subsidy that covers as much as $4,500 a year in schooling, may be taking educational shortcuts as they aggressively market themselves to soldiers.

"In these schools, the rule is faster and easier," said Greg von Lehmen, chief academic officer of the University of Maryland University College, the adult-education branch of the state system and one of the earliest and biggest providers of military education. "They're characterized by increasingly compressed course lengths and low academic expectations. One has to ask: Is the Department of Defense getting what it is seeking?"

BLOOMBERG
Robert Songer, director of the Lifelong Learning Program at Camp Lejeune, at the education center at Camp Lejeune, N.C. For-profit, online colleges are taking over the half-billion dollar annual market for military education. "In these schools, the rule is faster and easier," says one critic.

The schools are displacing public and private nonprofit colleges as higher educators of the U.S. military. They account for 29 percent of college enrollments and 40 percent of the half- billion-dollar annual tab in federal tuition assistance for active- duty students, according to Defense Department and military data. Taxpayers picked up $474 million for college tuition for 400,000 active-duty personnel in the year ended Sept. 30, 2008, more than triple the spending a decade earlier, Defense Department statistics show.

Some online schools offer free laptops or fast degrees. At Apollo Group Inc.'s University of Phoenix, the biggest for-profit college, active-duty military personnel can earn an associate's degree, which typically takes two years of study, in five weeks.



BLOOMBERG
Graphic shows increases in active-duty Marines enrolled at American Military University and in tuition assistance paid to the school by the Marine Corps. Online for-profit colleges such as AMU, enticed by military subsidies that cover as much as $4,500 a year in schooling, are winning over soldiers with promises of free textbooks and faster degrees.

"I'm afraid that the ease with which these outfits hand out diplomas is matched only by the disappointment of their graduates when they find out how little their degrees are actually worth," according to Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers in Washington.

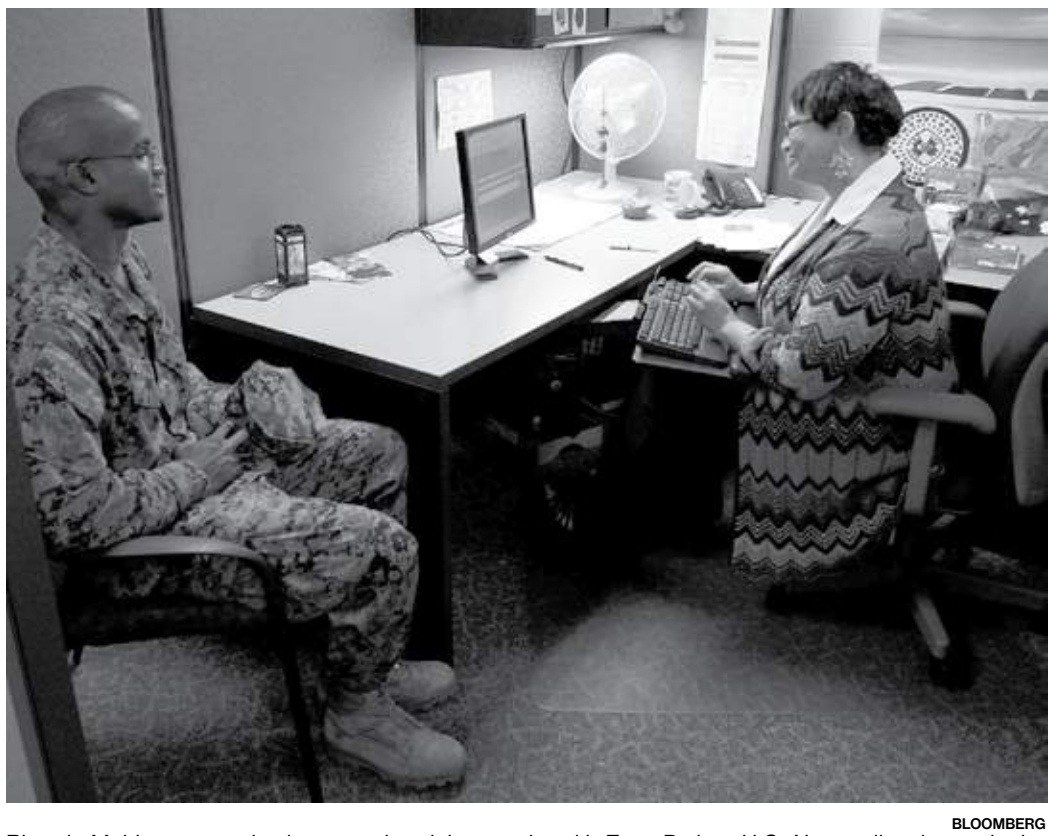
Credentials from online, for-profit schools are less helpful in getting civilian jobs, especially in a tight labor market, he said.

Mike Shields, a retired Marine Corps colonel and human resources director for U.S. field operations at Schindler Elevator Corp., rejects about 50 military candidates each year for the company's management development program because their graduate degrees come from online for-profits, he said in an interview.

"We don't even consider them," Shields said. "For the caliber of individuals and credentials we're looking for, we need what we feel is a more broadened and in-depth educational experience." He does hire service members with online degrees for jobs on non-leadership tracks, he said.

Several online for-profit schools have become a concern on military bases because of practices that exploit soldiers and the federal subsidies they are promised, said Songer, the Camp Lejeune director.

"Some of these schools prey on Marines," Songer said. "Day and night, they call you, they e-mail you. These servicemen get caught in that. Nobody in their families ever went to college. They don't know about college."



BLOOMBERG
Rhonda Mobley, an academic counselor, right, speaks with Enns Park, a U.S. Navy enlisted man, in the education center at Camp Lejeune, N.C. At the University of Phoenix, the biggest for-profit college in the U.S., active-duty military personnel can earn a two-year degree online in just five weeks.

Majority of college dropouts point to financial struggles as the main cause

By JENNA JOHNSON
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The No. 1 reason many young adults drop out of college is an inability to juggle school and work, according to a report released Wednesday.

When choosing between a degree and going to work, paying rent, buying groceries or supporting family members, many students are forced to drop out, said Jean Johnson, of Public Agenda, a nonpartisan public policy research firm that conducted a telephone survey of more than 600 people ages 22 to 30 for the report.

The research reflects a "very, very different reality" than the common image most people have of college as "a place where a young person goes and they become an adult," Johnson said. "So many of them are already assuming adult responsibilities."

Although strides have been made in increasing access to higher education for low-income and minority students, many of them are leaving school without a degree or certificate, Johnson said. Each fall, 2.8 million students enroll in some form of higher education, but fewer than half of students who start school graduate within six years, according to the U.S. Education Department. At public community colleges, only 20 percent of students graduate within three years.

The report is the first of three funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to examine access to college and college success.

Researchers found that students who drop out do not usually fit the Joe College stereotype: a student who debated which school to attend, lives on campus, attends class full-time and has help paying bills. For students who leave school, "the balancing act is not between going to class and attending football games and frat parties; it's more likely between going to class and punching a clock in order to pay rent," they wrote.

For these students, picking a school to attend is often a haphazard and uninformed process, the researchers wrote, and the top reasons the former students cited in choosing a college were location, class times and tuition rates. Fewer than a third based their decision on the academic reputation of the school.

Of students surveyed, 58 percent said they did not receive any financial help from their parents or relatives to pay tuition or fees, and 69 percent had no scholarships or financial aid.

When these students decided to drop out, 70 percent said they did so because they needed to work to support themselves; other reasons included not being able to afford tuition and fees, needing a break, classes that were not useful and needing more time to spend with family.

Many of these young adults told researchers they would consider going back to school, but full-time work and family responsibilities again keep many of them away. A third of students surveyed said that even if their tuition and books were fully covered, they could not go back to school because they could not afford to support themselves.

The report suggests ways to make it easier for working students to complete school, including allowing part-time students to receive financial aid, scheduling more classes at night and on weekends, reducing tuition and providing child care.

Life & Style

Ethan Hawke sinks his teeth into vampire movie

By ROGER MOORE
THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

No actor wants to look foolish, especially if there are a couple of Oscar nominations and a Tony nomination on his resume. And the time you worry about that, says Ethan Hawke, is "When you're sitting there, covered in fake blood, or somebody's handing you a bottle of blood that they're treating like a vintage wine."

Whatever the requirements of the scene, which had him wearing fangs and playing a vampire hematologist, Hawke couldn't help having his moment of doubt.

"'God, I hope this movie's good,' I'm thinking. 'If this is bad, not only is it embarrassing, it's DISGUSTING.'"

For "Daybreakers," which opens Jan. 8, Hawke was willing to tackle a genre that he, as a star of stage, screen and TV, hadn't chanced upon before. He "bought into the vision," the concept that German writer-director-siblings Michael and Peter Spierig came up with. A virus has allowed vampires to take over the world, hunting the last remaining humans, farming their blood. Hawke's character is a vampire who wants to save the human race by developing artificial blood or a cure for vampirism.

AP

In this film publicity image released by Lionsgate, Ethan Hawke, center, is shown in a scene from, "Daybreakers."

"This whole story—a world where vampires have taken over and vampires are destroying the last of their human blood supply—that's a metaphor for the human race today. That elevates the whole movie," Hawke says. "The thing that makes a great genre movie is one that's not just entertainment, not just horror or sci-fi or whatever. The ones I love are the genre pictures with some subversive message underlying it all."

Hawke, 39, has spent the last couple of years aging into and busily living up to a label *The Washington Post* once gave him, "a middle-aged actor who rarely stops working." He accepted the offer to do "Daybreakers" while performing a nine-hour trilogy of Tom Stoppard plays, "The Coast of Utopia." He's about to direct Sam Shepard's "A Lie of the Mind" on the New York stage.

"That has me more nervous than I've been in a very long time," Hawke admits.

And then there is the TV project he just finished—an adaptation of "Moby Dick" in which he plays Starbuck.

"Working on a film of a classic novel reminded me of being 18 and doing 'White Fang,'" he says. "When I was in high school, they made me read that story. I hated it. But that piece is poetry, beautiful, prescient poetry."

Hawke doesn't just look for messages in genre films like "Daybreakers." He hunts for deeper meaning in the classic roles, too.

"The fact that Herman Melville was writing this book about how pursuit of oil and greed for oil was going to corrupt and destroy us, a book about hunting whales in the 19th century, is amazing. It's like reading a newspaper from today—different kind of oil, still pursuing it. It still corrupts us.

His guiding principle, Hawke says, is trying to mix up the work—doing less lucrative plays for his craft, indie films for his art and commercial fare such as "Daybreakers" and the icy 1997 sci-fi thriller "Gattaca"—so "you can keep working and stay relevant."

"I'd be lying if I said I had confidence in every choice I've made, that I have faith in every film I do on every shot," he says. "But doing genre films is fun because I have so little experience with, you know, vampires. If I was Christopher Lee and had done a hundred of these, it wouldn't be new and fun."

Letters to Michelangelo repaint his loner image

By DIANE TOROIAN KEAGGY
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

ST. LOUIS—When you picture Michelangelo, does the image in your mind resemble Moses? Ben-Hur? In other words, Charlton Heston?

Heston's portrayal of Michelangelo in the classic film "The Agony and the Ecstasy" has largely shaped our collective impression of the artist. Based on an Irving Stone novel, the movie portrays Michelangelo as a loner, a prodigy, a pain.

But a new biography by William Wallace, a Washington University art history professor and leading Renaissance expert, challenges those enduring myths.

"The last great biography of Michelangelo is more than 100 years old," Wallace said. "Some people read 'The Agony and the Ecstasy' as a biography but, of course, it is a novel. In 100 years, we've learned a lot about him."

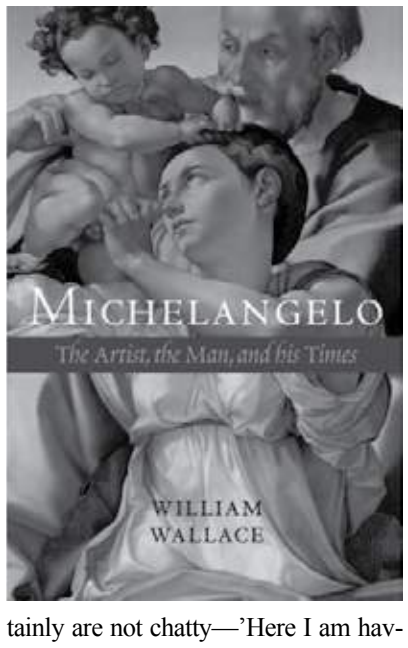
Wallace is responsible for a sizable chunk of that new research. He has published dozens of articles, and has written and edited four books on Michelangelo. He has traveled to the quarries where Michelangelo mined marble for the Pieta, lived in the neighborhoods once occupied by Michelangelo's best friends, and examined the artist's paintings, sculptures, drawings and poetry.

"I look at the work differently every time I see it, and that's part of the wonder," Wallace said.

In his latest work, "Michelangelo: The Artist, the Man and His Times," Wallace draws on about 900 letters, never published in English, written to Michelangelo by friends and family. In them, he finds a dramatically different Michelangelo than the one scholars encountered in the artist's 500 surviving letters.

"We tend to think that he's petty, and we assumed that he was too great a genius to get along with people, and that's just not true," Wallace said. "We have enough evidence that shows he had a huge number of friends, and he is very loyal to them and his family.

"Michelangelo only wrote letters if there was a problem. His letters certainly are not chatty—'Here I am having a great time painting the Sistine Chapel.' The problem with 'The Agony and the Ecstasy' is Irving Stone had all of Michelangelo's letters that had been translated into English, but you didn't have the 900 that provide a different viewpoint."



We talked with Wallace about Michelangelo, his relationships and how he forever changed the artist's place in society.

Q: Michelangelo didn't work alone, even employing craftsmen to paint portions of the Sistine Chapel. Was he a good boss?

A: You can't undertake a huge architectural project without an immense amount of help. We tended to assume that Michelangelo didn't bother with these people, but in fact we have the lists of their names. We know who they are, where they lived, how much he paid them, how he managed them.

I was interested in the nitty gritty of how does a great genius get a huge crew of talented people to realize his vision. The most remarkable revelation is that his creativity is not interrupted by these details. He's able to move between the mundane and sublime with absolute ease. On one hand, he can argue with a carver about the weight of marble and, on another, he'll be thinking about a sculpture. He has a left-right brain that functions beautifully.

Q: Michelangelo isn't afraid to tell off popes or make them wait in line for a sculpture. How did he get away with such insolence?

A: He ended up working for nine popes. He worked well with people who showed him respect, and that's what he earned from popes. They realized they were very lucky to be working with him. He was always working on gigantic projects and, if he didn't want to work for you, all he had to say was, 'I'm busy,' and it was true.

Q: Michelangelo never married, but he was devoted to his father and his only nephew. Does it surprise you how concerned he was with their medications and real estate investments?

A: That's certainly the unexpected side of Michelangelo. Not only is he close to his family, but he really cares for their well-being. He helps them invest and is concerned about providing a legacy. If you were to ask him in his old age what was his most important concern, he would say the continuation of his family.

It's surprising because artists at the time came from a low-class. They are craftsmen, and there is no idea of a family history or background. Many of them don't even have proper last names. Leonardo, for example, is named after the town where he was born. Many don't get married because they don't make a lot of money, and if you can't make money, no one wants to marry their daughter to you.

It's still true nowadays. No one wants an artist as a son-in-law. So Michelangelo is unusual from birth in coming from an important family. He takes great pride in the ancestry of his own family. So in that sense, he is so much different from Renaissance artists.

Q: So why did he become an artist if it was beneath him?

A: That is the question. There's that wonderful story of his father beating him when he wants to be an artist. I don't think he set out to be an artist. There is this myth that he was a prodigy because a prodigy is something that goes along with genius.

But Michelangelo comes to art rather late and haphazardly because of his relationship with the Medici family. He becomes a person of court—someone who writes poetry, maybe plays a lute and dabbles art. He did more than any other artist to raise the stature of the artistic profession.

It was a craft before him, and it becomes a profession of geniuses after him. Now, artists have a certain dignity in society even if they are still considered marginal weirdos.

Author's year of 'Living Oprah' was quite enough

By CRAIG WILSON
USA TODAY

Oprah Winfrey calls it living your "best life." So Robyn Okrant decided to live hers by the talk-show queen's dictates for a full year.

In 2008, Okrant followed every piece of advice offered by Oprah on her show, her Web site and her magazine, O—from what to wear (leopard flats) to what to buy (chairs) to what to eat (turkey burgers).

Now she's sharing her story in a book out Monday, "Living Oprah: My One-Year Experiment to Walk the Walk of the Queen of Talk" (Center Street/Hachette Book Group, 257 pages, $24.99).

Her motivation? She thought that since Oprah was the "epicenter" of the self-help and personal-growth movement, she'd put her advice to the test, just to see if it did lead to Okrant's "best life."

It wasn't easy. Okrant says she was "broken down, my tank empty" by October 2008 and thrilled when it was all over. "I got to revel in all my bad habits again," says Okrant, 37.

Her biggest surprise? "I guess that I actually did get clarity in many areas of my life that I didn't even know were cloudy," says the writer, performer and yoga teacher in Chicago.

Okrant recommends three Oprah tips to everyone: Adopt a pet from a shelter (she got a cat), declutter your home, and do hands-on philanthropy. "I now deliver food to a food pantry." The one tip Okrant could never master, however, was dressing as Oprah says. She says she felt as if she were "pressed into a mold."

When she began the experiment, she hadn't planned to write a book but thought she might gather enough stories to put together a one-woman show. But she says she realized she needed closure from the project.

Okrant wrote a daily blog (livingoprah.com) about her experiment. She's starting a new blog about "facing all my habits head on" (on both robynokrant.com and livingoprah.com) this week.

(Winfrey, who is ending her talk show in 2011, was on break last week and unavailable to comment on the book. Okrant says she has not heard from Oprah's camp.)

So, does Okrant think she came close to her "best life"?

"I think I eventually found it when I stopped working on it," she says. "It wasn't until I was able to rest, a couple of months after the project, that I found myself in my pajamas and very happy. I was at ease in my own skin."

Cox, Kudrow of 'Friends' reunite in 'Cougar Town'

By DERRIK J. LANG
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

CULVER CITY, California (AP)—These "Friends" like sticking together.

Courteney Cox and Lisa Kudrow, who starred as Monica Geller and Phoebe Buffay for 10 seasons on NBC's "Friends," have reteamed for an episode of "Cougar Town," Cox's ABC comedy that earned her a Golden Globe nomination for her role as zany divorcee Jules Cobb. Kudrow guest stars as a nasty dermatologist who digs her claws into Cobb's ex-husband. The episode airs in the U.S. later this week.

"I get to play a really mean person," teased Kudrow, "so that's really fun."

During a break from filming the episode last November, the duo—who are pals in real life, as evidenced by their unabashed banter—chatted about working opposite each other again. (Last year, Cox guest starred on Kudrow's wry online improv series "Web Therapy" as a psychic looking to get her sixth sense back from Kudrow's matter-of-fact therapist.)

Kudrow insisted she would have taken just about any role offered on "Cougar Town," as long as it didn't require any nudity, something that apparently hasn't been an issue for the 45-year-old star of the show, who has taken it off in the name of laughs on more than one occasion since "Cougar Town" debuted on ABC last September to over 11 million viewers.

"I've turned a corner," Cox said jokingly. "Now that I'm this age, I've decided to go as nude as possible."

"You look great," Kudrow extolled.

"No, Lisa, I'm lit well," Cox retorted.

"Well, I could be on the surface of the sun, and it wouldn't look good," Kudrow quipped.

Cox said there was an open invitation for all her "Friends" co-stars—Kudrow, David Schwimmer, Matthew Perry, Matt LeBlanc and Jennifer Aniston—to stop by "Cougar Town," but she was most anxious for a visit from Kudrow, a Groundlings improv vet who starred in such films as "Romy and Michele's High School Reunion" and "Wonderland" during her "Friends" tenure.

"I really wanted Lisa to be on the show, if she would," said Cox. "First of all, she's so unbelievably talented. I knew she'd go out there and play a really fun character, so it just kind of worked out perfectly for her to play a dermatologist that is very judgmental and not nice. She takes those risks. ... It was great."

After "Friends" ended in 2004, both actresses returned to TV in leading roles on their own series. The 46-year-old Kudrow starred for one season as faded sitcom star Valerine Cherish on the HBO faux-reality series "The Comeback," while Cox spent two seasons as cutthroat editor Lucy Spiller on the FX tabloid drama "Dirt."

In this publicity image released ABC, former "Friends" cast mates Courteney Cox Arquette, right, and Lisa Kudrow, reunite on the set of ABC's "Cougar Town," airing, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010 at 9:30 p.m. EST.

AP

"Friends" fans should not anticipate a full-blown reunion of the Central Perk denizens—either on "Cougar Town" or the big screen. Kudrow and Cox insisted "Friends" co-creators David Crane and Marta Kauffman have never pitched the pair an idea for "Friends: The Movie" despite the success of "Sex and the City" at strutting from cable channel HBO into multiplexes in 2008.

"'Sex and the City' was already filmic," said Kudrow. "It was a single-camera show that was like a half-hour movie every week, anyway. Our show was multi-camera in front of an audience. Whenever movie versions of those types of shows have been done, they've been sort of satirical. Maybe in 10 more years, other people will play us and make fun of it

Socialite daughter of New York Jets owner has died

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Casey Johnson, the socialite daughter of New York Jets owner Woody Johnson has died, a spokesman for the family and police said Monday. She was 30.

TMZ.com reported that Johnson was found dead Monday. Police officers responded to her Los Angeles home around 11:51 a.m. where paramedics had already pronounced Johnson dead, officer Sara Faden said.

Faden said she did not know how long Johnson may have been dead by the time authorities arrived.

She said Johnson's death may have been from natural causes since a preliminary death investigation didn't turn up any signs of foul play. But Faden added that a final cause of death will be determined by coroner's officials, who will seek toxicology tests. Results of those tests could take six weeks to obtain.

In a statement released through publicist Jesse Derris, the Johnson family says it "is mourning its tragic loss, and asks for privacy during this very difficult time."

Casey Johnson gained celebrity as the girlfriend of Tila Tequila, a reality TV star best known for "A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila," which ran for two seasons on MTV.

Tequila's publicist says the two were engaged.

Argentine singer Sandro dies at 64

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)—Doctors say Argentine singer Sandro, famous across Latin America for his romantic ballads and rock and pop tunes, has died of complications from heart and lung transplant surgery. He was 64.

Doctor Claudio Burgos says Sandro died Monday at the Italian Hospital in the western city of Mendoza.

Sandro, whose real name was Roberto Sanchez, suffered from chronic lung disease that led to the Nov. 20 surgery.

His health had been delicate since then, with a serious of complications and setbacks.

Born in 1945, he was the author of hits such as "Asi" ("Like That") and "Dame fuego" ("Give Me Fire").

He was the first Latin American to sing at Madison Square Garden.

He recorded 52 albums and acted in 16 movies.

In Loving Memory of

Retired Tinian Police Captain
Antonio Manglona Borja
(TON Bernadine)

Born on May 25, 1963, was called by our Lord Jesus Christ to his eternal rest on Thursday, December 31, 2009 at the age of 46

He now joins his:

Grandparents	:	Guillermo DLC. Borja & Maria Manibusan Cing
	:	Jose Taisacan Manglona & Bernadina Masga Manglona
Sister	:	Lydia Borja Palacios
Brother-In-Laws	:	Herman P. Palacios, George S. Benavente
Nieces	:	Jerica B. Aldan, Joaquina Rosanna B. Aldan
Nephew	:	Richard N. Borja, Jr.

He will be extremely missed and forever remembered in the hearts of his:

Wife	:	Bernadine Palacios Borja
Children	:	Anthony Silvestre Palacios Borja
		Kristine Palacios Borja
		Dennis Palacios Borja
Parents	:	Elias Manibusan Borja & Rosa Manglona Borja
Parents-In-Law	:	Silvestre Cepeda Palacios & Augusta Hofschneider Palacios

Brothers/Sisters-In-Laws & Family:
Francisco M. Borja/Bernadita DLG. San Nicolas
Lourdes B./Joaquin P. Aldan
George M. Borja/Concepcion P. Aldan
Jose M. Borja
Agnes M. Borja/Jose Topasna
Ricardo M. Borja/Sarah N. Borja
Ana B. Benavente/Martin Sablan
Elias M. Borja/Barbara C. Borja
Lucia B. Cruz/Vicente N. Cruz
Marcelino M. Borja/Evelyn E. Borja

Brothers/Sisters-In-Law & Family:
Ann Ruth P./Johnny M. Rivera
Vivian P./Francisco D. Cabrera
Geraldine P./Jose C. Mafnas
Peter H. Palacios, Sr./Bernadita C. Palacios
Carleen P./Senator Joseph M. Mendiola
Silvestre H. Palacios, Jr./Rosita C. Palacios

Numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews

God Children:
Jeannie P. Mafnas
Veronica B. Borja
Felipe M. Aquino
Tasi G. Long
Richard S. Hofschneider
Darius B. Aldan
Peter H. Palacios, Jr.
Kerry M. Borja
Juan D. Atalig
Colleen SN. Cing
Heinz P. Hofschneider
Charles Borja
Herbert C. Borja
Patrick A. Cabrera
Talisha A. Borja
Regene C. Palacios
Ashley B. Hofschneider
Jasmine N.P. Rivera
Maxine M. Barcinas

Family Friend: David Bamba

Nightly rosary is being said at 8:00 p.m. at his residence in San Jose, Tinian. His remains will be arriving from the Philippines on January 7th at 1:35 a.m. and will be transported to Tinian at 10 a.m. On Saturday, January 9th, his remains will be brought to San Jose Church at 8 a.m. for viewing. Mass of Christian burial will be at 1:30 p.m., followed by interment services at the Tinian cemetery.

Blagojevich, Strawberry to compete on 'Apprentice'

NEW YORK (AP)—Donald Trump boasted that the upcoming season of "The Celebrity Apprentice" is the best ever and promised the star power of its cast "blows `Dancing With the Stars' away."

Yes, it's a new cycle for the Trump-hosted competition show, which won't premiere until March 14 but threw an introductory news conference way back last October, with sworn-to-secrecy members of the media meeting the contenders.

Now NBC says it's time to unveil that roster of 14 participants, who will likely spur responses ranging from "Wow!" to "Huh?"

Maybe the most interesting (to use Trump's pet adjective) participant is former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Vaulted to infamy by headlines and punch lines, he is charged with scheming to auction off President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat, campaign fundraising abuses and other offenses. He was removed from office last January, but has denied wrongdoing.

Maybe not so interesting: the comedian-actor Sinbad and Australian TV chef Curtis Stone.

"I'm certainly not a household name," said comedian-author Carol Leifer, but she sounded confident. "I'm not surprised that Joan Rivers won (last season), because, as a standup comic, you're a one-man band—it makes you very prepared for stressful situations to be able to react to a lot of pressure. Humor is a weapon anywhere and everywhere!"

AP

In this April 14, 2009 file photo, former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich arrives at federal court for his arraignment on federal racketeering and fraud charges in Chicago.

Former Poison vocalist Bret Michaels declared that, with a party-hearty rock singer's image, he would be assessed as the season's "super-underdog."

"But I've been my own boss since I've been 19 years old," said the 46-year-old former star of the "Rock of Love" reality show. "For better or worse, I've been on my own, I've learned to roll with the punches."

Then the pro wrestler-actor who calls himself Goldberg issued fair warning.

"I know I'm going to explode during this show at some point and say things I probably don't mean," he said. "I realize that about myself. I'm human and have flaws."

Baseball great Darryl Strawberry, rock-star wife and TV personality Sharon Osbourne, and Olympic gold-medal sprinter Michael Johnson will also be competing, along with singer Cyndi Lauper, actress Holly Robinson Peete and Victoria's Secret model Selita Ebanks.

As they spoke, the contestants were scheduled to begin taping "Celebrity Apprentice" the next day, and WWE wrestler-model Maria Kanellis was asked if they were already sizing up each other.

"Of course, we are!" she replied.

The celebrities won't be vying for a job with Trump, as in the old, civilian-cast "Apprentice," but instead will compete in business-oriented tasks around Manhattan to raise money for (and publicize) their favorite charities.

"I live a fairly normal life. I'm a mom with two kids," said Olympic swimmer Summer Sanders, who is championing the Right to Play, an organization that uses sport and play to improve the lives of disadvantaged children. "But to have the opportunity to introduce my charity to the world is the reason I chose to do this."

Blagojevich, whose chosen charity is the Children's Cancer Center (which assists kids with life-threatening diseases and their families), has tried before to land a role on a reality show. Last spring he attempted to join NBC's "I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here," but a federal judge barred him from going to the Costa Rican site where the show originated. His wife, former first lady Patti Blagojevich, competed in his place.

"The conventional thinking among a lot of traditional lawyers is that you simply don't do these things, you don't say anything, you hide somewhere until you have your day in court," said Blagojevich.

By contrast, his instinct is "to fight back," he explained, which maybe helps account for his participation on "Celebrity Apprentice."

"It's a wilderness period for me," Blagojevich acknowledged. "But sometimes real opportunities develop in your life's journey that you can't really see when you're facing tumultuous times and the kind of storm that I'm facing."

LA judge sets hearing in Polanski sex case

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Roman Polanski's long-delayed criminal case will return to a courtroom for a hearing later this week, a court official said Monday.

Superior Court spokesman Allan Parachini said Judge Peter Espinoza will convene a hearing on Polanski's case for Wednesday afternoon.

It's the first time the 32-year-old sex case will be back in court since a state appeals court last month rejected Polanski's bid to have it dismissed. The appeals court, however, suggested the case could end quickly if Polanski's attorneys agreed to sentencing in absentia or he drops his opposition to being extradited to the United States.

Polanski

Polanski is under house arrest at his Swiss chalet. He was arrested in late September on a fugitive warrant.

Los Angeles County district attorney's spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons said Polanski's lawyers requested an in-chambers conference on the case, but prosecutors objected. Espinoza then scheduled a public hearing; Gibbons said she did not know what would be discussed.

Previous in-chambers discussions have proved controversial. Misconduct has been cited in the case because the original judge may have consulted with a former prosecutor about how to sentence Polanski.

There are also conflicting accounts of whether a judge in the late 1990s agreed to resolve the case, but only if the sentencing hearing was televised.

Phone and e-mail messages left for Polanski's attorney, Chad Hummel, were not immediately returned.

Polanski was initially accused of raping a 13-year-old girl after plying her with champagne and a Quaalude pill during a 1977 modeling shoot. He was indicted on six felony counts, including rape by use of drugs, child molestation and sodomy, but he pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of unlawful sexual intercourse.

He fled to his native France on the eve of sentencing in 1978 after spending 42 days a California prison for a psychiatric evaluation.

With 'A Single Man,' Colin Firth is hot again

By ROGER MOORE
THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

Of all the acclaim that's come to Colin Firth's depiction of hidden grief in "A Single Man," precious little of it has focused on the physical Firth. At 49, the Golden Globe nominee looks 10 years younger and as fit as he was in those glory days as Mr. Darcy on TV's "Pride & Prejudice."

"I pick up the script, and it says 'Naked man lies on bed.' And then a few pages in, 'Naked man jumps in ocean,'" Firth recalls. "Well, I thought. It's time. One more push against gravity before I turn 50 and it's all downhill."

The actor whipped himself into shape, physically and mentally. And the result is one of the most lauded performances of the year, a film that has already earned Firth a lovefest from the press—he "gives his most nuanced, compelling performance" (Screen International).

"I'm thrilled by the way people are reacting to this film, partly because this film is small, personal and I didn't feel like I was part of some big scene, some huge film," he says from London. "To be given a whole day in the life of a man, playing a character who is never off-screen, and be working with such a small group of people and do it in just 21 very intense and intimate days, and then have people love it? That's as good as it gets."

But he's been here before—the acclaim, the high profile. He knows better than to let it go to his head.

"This is happening as I continue my day job. Filming another movie ("The King's Speech") that's just as intense, with just as long hours. So while I'm glowing from the fact that people are saying lovely things about this film, I'm in the middle of working on the next one, which keeps your feet on the ground."

Firth had his first blush of stardom during the mania of 1995's "Pride & Prejudice," a Jane Austen TV miniseries that so took over Britain that it inspired "Bridget Jones' Diary," with Firth going on to play the Darcy-ish lead in that, too, opposite Renee Zellweger.

Mark Strong, who worked with him back then (they did "Fever Pitch" in 1997) says, "What's wonderful about something like this is that it's happening this time to someone who has been doing it long enough to know the vagaries of the business. It's not a linear career, this movie acting thing. It's like a wave, an up and down thing. He had it when he was Mr. Darcy. 'Wow! You're going to be on top of the world!' But he goes back to doing interesting parts that maybe weren't as visible. And years later he's hot again. He deserves it."

"A Single Man" opens in much of the country in mid-January. Firth says the experience of making it—a movie with a lean budget, a fashion-designer-turned-filmmaker as director (Tom Ford) and not a lot of co-stars on the set—"was maybe the most intense acting experience of my life. The character is so focused, so sad and so determined to take care of the things he needs to see to before he kills himself."

In that compact period of time, it was easier to stay focused on his character's morose frame of mind—the "acceptance" stage of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' five mental stages of death and dying.

"People, intentionally or inadvertently, keep trying to save George," Firth says of his "Single Man," a college professor. In the film, George meets neighbors, strangers, fellow professors, a student with a crush on him (Nicholas Hoult). "They all say to him, one way or the other, 'Live. Live!' And he won't be swayed."

Colin Firth has been here before—the acclaim, the high profile. He knows better than to let it go to his head.

What kept the actor going was "focusing on the 'positive choice.' Unhappiness is what we struggle against. So you don't play unhappiness. What I play is George's attempt to mask or overcome this heartbreak. Grief is the enemy. He wants peace, so the decision to kill himself is the desire for peace and he's accepted that."

Over the years, Firth says, "you get older and lose things and can't recall what you were thinking or feeling while you made a movie. You develop stock answers to interview questions, which you recycle from film to film. You lose the truth.

"But the intensity of this experience I can recall more clearly than any other. And funnily enough," he says chuckling, "when I close my eyes and think of this movie, I see Nick Hoult's incredible blue eyes looking back at me."

UK PM Brown named GQ's worst-dressed man of year

LONDON (AP)—It's a poll victory, of sorts. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has been named the worst-dressed man of the year by the British edition of GQ magazine.

The magazine said Brown, who faces an election this year, is "anything but a prime example of British style." Brown's signature look is a dark suit, slightly rumpled.

Wild-haired comedian Russell Brand was second on the worst-dressed list, while French President Nicolas Sarkozy was third.

"Twilight" heartthrob Robert Pattinson was named best-dressed man by the magazine on Monday.

The best-dressed top 10 also includes the members of reunited boy band Take That, James Bond star Daniel Craig and the dapper animated star of the movie "Fantastic Mr. Fox," voiced by George Clooney.

Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown meets school children from St Monica's Primary School in Hackney, east London. Monday Jan. 4, 2010. AP

McConaughey announces birth of 2nd child—a girl

DALLAS (AP)—Actor Matthew McConaughey and his girlfriend have announced the birth of their second child - a baby girl.

The actor says on his Web site that Vida Alves McConaughey was born Sunday. She weighs seven pounds, seven ounces.

McConaughey says his girlfriend, model Camila Alves, is "recovering wonderfully" and the couple welcomed "this little lady into our family."

The couple had a son, Levi, in 2008.

McConaughey spokesman Alan Nierob confirmed the Web posting in an e-mail Monday.

Emile Hirsch joins celeb climb of Kilimanjaro

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Emile Hirsch is on his way to Africa to climb the continent's highest peak.

The "Milk" and "Into the Wild" star is joining Jessica Biel, Lupe Fiasco, Isabel Lucas and Elizabeth Gore for a week-long trek up Mount Kilimanjaro. The Summit on the Summit expedition, which begins Thursday, aims to use star power to help raise awareness about the need for clean water worldwide.

Hirsch

The 24-year-old Hirsch says the climb combines "an epic adventure with an educational process on the global water crisis." Fans can follow the climb online and donate as little as a dollar to provide clean water to those who need it.

Hirsch says he's ready for the more than 19,000-foot challenge, saying, "Put this on the books: I'm making it to the top."

Mexican rocker Alejandra Guzman's flight reversed

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexican rock singer Alejandra Guzman's plans for a Pacific beach vacation were reversed when she got into an argument with a fan during an airline flight, prompting the pilots to return the plane to Mexico City.

Guzman's spokesman, Jose Zepeda, confirmed Monday that the Latin Grammy winner grew frustrated with another passenger who allegedly pestered her on a Mexicana Click flight Saturday to the Pacific coast resort of Huatulco.

The passenger, whose name has not been released, made a "very pushy and reckless attempt" to photograph Guzman, even though the singer and her assistant asked the fan to respect her privacy, Zepeda said.

No one was charged.

Guzman's management company, Ocesa Sei Track, released a statement calling the incident "an altercation between two private parties that was not a major issue."

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Burt Bacharach postpones shows after surgery

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A publicist says Burt Bacharach is postponing several concerts as he recovers from back surgery. Publicist Linda Dozoretz says the 81-year-old composer is recovering at a hospital after the New Year's Eve surgery. Dozoretz says Bacharach's prognosis is excellent, but he will need to postpone scheduled concerts through mid-March. Performances in Australia, New Zealand and Palm Beach, Fla., will be rescheduled for later in this year or early next year. Bacharach most recently performed on Dec. 19 in Italy.

CBS morning host Rodriguez expecting second child

NEW YORK (AP)—Maggie Rodriguez of CBS' "The Early Show" is expecting her second child. She announced her pregnancy on Monday's show. Rodriguez said to co-host Harry Smith, weather forecaster Dave Price and newsman Russ Mitchell: "You guys are going to be uncles!" Rodriguez has a 4-year-old daughter, Daniella. Her husband, Michael Rodriguez, is a marketing executive at the Telemundo television network. Their baby is due in July.

'Couples Retreat' actor Vince Vaughn marries

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Wedding Crashers" actor Vince Vaughn is a groom. Vaughn's spokesman, Alan Nierob, said Monday the 39-year-old "Couples Retreat" and "Swingers" actor wed 31-year-old real estate agent Kyla Weber in a small private ceremony Saturday outside Chicago. He said the nuptials were attended by family and close friends. It is the first marriage for both Weber and "The Break-Up" and "Four Christmases" leading man. Vaughn previously dated "Break-Up" co-star Jennifer Aniston.

Howard Stern sidekick Artie Lange hospitalized

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—A publicist for Artie Lange says the comedian and radio personality has been hospitalized. In an e-mail sent Monday to The Associated Press, publicist Hilary Hansen declined to elaborate, saying, "Artie has chosen to keep all information on this matter between him and his doctor." The 42-year-old Lange, best known as Howard Stern's radio sidekick, has been absent from Stern's Sirius radio show for a month. On Monday's show, Stern said Lange isn't leaving the program and called him "a tremendous contributor." Lange, who lives in Hoboken, N.J., has battled drug addiction. In September, a New Jersey judge revoked his driving privileges for seven months after he mitted he was under the influence of prescribed sleeping pills in a minor traffic accident.

Morgan Freeman replaces Cronkite on CBS voiceover

NEW YORK (AP)—Nearly six months after Walter Cronkite's death, his voice is leaving the "CBS Evening News." His introduction of anchor Katie Couric was replaced Monday by a voiceover featuring actor Morgan Freeman. The legendary CBS News anchor recorded the introduction, played at the beginning of most newscasts, when Couric started at CBS in 2006. Cronkite's voice was kept on the air even after his death July 17. "As comforting as it is to look back on the great career that Walter had, we're looking forward now and we just felt it was the right time to make the move that at some point had to be made," said CBS News and Sports President Sean McManus. "This seemed like the appropriate time since Walter's passing to make the move."

Twyla Tharp's 'Come Fly Away' heads to Broadway

NEW YORK (AP)—Meet Broadway's latest musical-theater duo: choreographer Twyla Tharp and Frank Sinatra. "Come Fly Away" is a dance musical conceived, choreographed and directed by Tharp. Producer James L. Nederlander said Monday that it will open March 25 at the Marquis Theatre, with preview performances beginning March 1. The show is about four couples who fall in and out of love. It features classic Sinatra vocals such as "Fly Me to the Moon," "My Way" and "That's Life." Casting has not been announced. The musical was originally titled "Come Fly With Me" when it played a sold-out engagement last year at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta.

Embarrassing pictures send a thousand words of warning

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: Shortly after college and a bad breakup, I met someone I thought was a "nice" guy. I allowed him to take sexually explicit photos of me. I realize now that I did it because I had very low self-esteem back then.

The moment he snapped the pictures I regretted it and asked for them back. He refused, and even tried to extort money from me with threats of sending copies to my workplace. I was working for a Fortune 500 company at the time and was scared to death. Fortunately, he didn't follow through on his threat.

Fast forward 20 years: I am now a stay-at-home mom with a wonderful husband and two young children. I still think about the mistakes I made all those years ago, and I had a dream recently about this particular situation. I'm not worried about my husband finding out because I told him about this before we were married. However, I do wonder what happened to the pictures. With today's technology, they could be anywhere now.

Who we are today is not necessarily who we are going to be tomorrow. Abby, please warn young girls and boys to THINK before doing something that can possibly follow them through a lifetime.

NAMELESS IN GEORGIA

DEAR NAMELESS: Amen! But your letter is a more effective warning than any sermon that could come from me. Not only is it a fact that the photos and statements we post on the Internet are there for eternity, but the "sexts," texts, videos and blogs of yesteryear can haunt us like tattered vagrant ghosts instead of staying buried. One need only recall the embarrassment of certain celebrities—who should have known better—whose names and images have been blasted across the media and learn from their mistakes.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife had a series of affairs during our 25 years of marriage. I loved her, so I tried to ignore what was happening for the sake of our three children. When she left me for her boss, divorce was my only option.

The years have passed and I am remarried to a wonderful woman. We are happy together and life is good.

Abby, what should my role be in building a bridge between my children and their mother? Our oldest son hasn't spoken to her in seven years. The middle child, our daughter, has accepted her mother's husband. Our younger son blocks his mother's calls and e-mails.

The kids are in their 20s and live on their own. The hurt is still there from her betrayal, cheating and lies, but I worry about my kids and their relationship with their mother. Is it my responsibility to intercede on her behalf?

DISTRESSED DAD IN ILLINOIS

DEAR DISTRESSED DAD: No. In fact, you should stay out of it.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I just started counseling for postpartum depression. My husband keeps asking me what we talked about. During the counseling sessions I discuss all aspects of my life -- including my husband. How can I let him know that what I discuss with my therapist is none of his business?

NEW MAMA IN ARIZONA

DEAR NEW MAMA: Your husband's curiosity is natural, particularly if he has never had any counseling. My advice is to tell him that during the sessions, you and your therapist talk about your feelings. Then invite him to a session and let him listen. Unless he is one of the causes of your depression, he'll probably be bored.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HOW COLD IS IT OUTSIDE?
I DON'T KNOW. WHY DON'T YOU CHECK?
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IT'S PRETTY DARN COLD, I'D SAY.
LET ME SHOW YOU AN INTERESTING GADGET THAT'S HANGING OUTSIDE THE WINDOW.
WATTERSON
1-6

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

ARLENE, YOU LOOK NICE TODAY
JIM DAVIS 1-6
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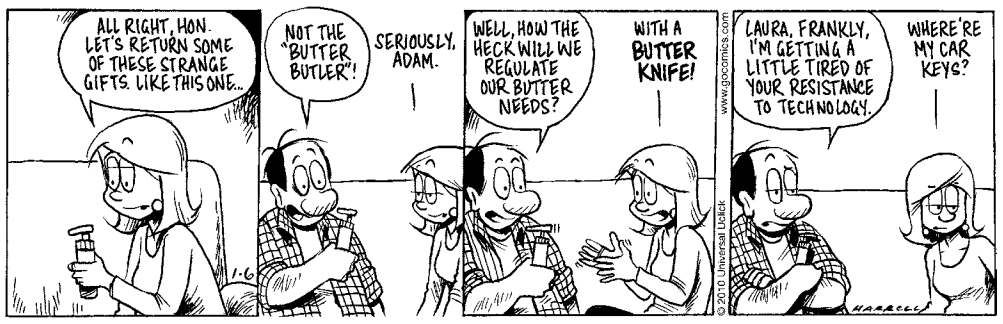
WHY, THANK YOU, GARFIELD, SO DO YOU
DON'T YOU KNOW IT!
AAAND THE MOMENT HAS PASSED
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ALL RIGHT, HON. LET'S RETURN SOME OF THESE STRANGE GIFTS. LIKE THIS ONE...
1-6
NOT THE "BUTTER BUTLER"!
SERIOUSLY, ADAM.
WELL, HOW THE HECK WILL WE REGULATE OUR BUTTER NEEDS?
WITH A BUTTER KNIFE!
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www.gocomics.com
LAURA, FRANKLY, I'M GETTING A LITTLE TIRED OF YOUR RESISTANCE TO TECHNOLOGY.
WHERE'RE MY CAR KEYS?
HARRELL

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

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YOU NOTICED THE GUNS, HUH?
YES. YOU'D BE PERFECT FOR THE "BEFORE" PHOTO.
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Now, on a memo
5 Early bird?
8 Oodles
12 Undraped
13 Ultra-modernist
14 "Forget it!"
15 Attack without restraint
17 Actor Rip
18 Long step
19 Ducklings' pops
21 Meadow
22 Ganges wrap
23 Curved line
26 Billboards
28 Male singing voice
31 Nitwit
33 Droop
35 Go nowhere
36 Capital of Jordan
38 Drops on the lawn
40 Tramcar load
41 The era of Shak.
43 Catch red-handed
45 Ornamental grating
47 Washington neighbor
51 Stereo counterpart
52 Meet
54 Female singing voice
55 "Norma —"
56 Feline, to Francisco
57 Old Dodge model
58 MGM motto start
59 Furry sci-fi critter

DOWN
1 Picnic invaders
2 Tallow
3 Hebrew month
4 Danger
5 Groups of nine
6 Comprehend
7 Merchandise
8 Brightest star in Scorpio
9 Investigate
10 Shrek is one
11 Oodles
16 Thought
20 Snitch
23 Lawyers' org.
24 Data storage site
25 Inherit
27 Despondent
29 Rowing need
30 "Catcher in the —"
32 Increase rapidly
34 "Mapped" hereditary matter
37 Goose egg
39 Distort
42 Marty, in "Madagascar"
44 Ecru
45 Fed
46 Portrayal
48 Rodents do it
49 "Beetle Bailey" dog
50 Corner
53 Eg. and Syr., once

Solution time: 21 mins.

M	E	A	D	■	S	A	P	■	J	A	M	B
O	R	C	A	■	Q	U	A	■	O	H	I	O
J	O	H	N	B	U	L	L	■	B	O	R	N
O	S	E	■	R	I	D	■	K	A	Y	A	K
■	■	■	J	A	B	■	P	I	C	■	■	■
B	A	R	O	N	■	P	A	N	T	H	E	R
A	L	E	C	■	F	U	N	■	I	O	W	A
Z	E	B	U	L	O	N	■	T	O	T	E	M
■	■	■	L	O	X	■	T	E	N	■	■	■
R	E	C	A	P	■	Y	E	S	■	F	O	E
O	D	O	R	■	J	O	D	H	P	U	R	S
D	I	L	L	■	A	D	D	■	S	N	A	P
S	T	A	Y	■	G	A	Y	■	I	D	L	Y

Yesterday's answer 1-6

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				16				■	17			
18						■	19	20				
■	■	■	21			■	22				■	■
23	24	25	■	26		27	■	28			29	30
31			32	■	33		34	■	35			
36				37	■	38		39	■	40		
■	■	41			42	■	43		44	■	■	■
45	46					■	47			48	49	50
51				■	52	53						
54				■	55			■	56			
57				■	58			■	59			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Danny Pintauro, 33; Gabrielle Reece, 40; Rowan Atkinson, 55; Bonnie Franklin, 66

Happy Birthday: Don't let obstacles stand in your way. Look at added responsibilities and burdens as life lessons that will come in handy in the future. You will be looked up to for your clever and economic way of handling matters that others may shy away from. The experiences you have will lead to an unusual proposal. Your numbers are 7, 11, 14, 27, 30, 32, 45

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't let restrictions worry you. If you are focused on what needs to be accomplished, you will get what you need to do out of the way and can take care of issues that are causing you difficulties. A work-related matter may stir up emotions. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You'll have plenty to say that may help you at a personal level but, when it comes to talking business, don't give away too much information. Gather all the facts you can from someone with more experience and clout than you. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't let your spending habits be your downfall. Legal matters, contracts or investments must be dealt with conservatively. You can make some headway if you are dealing with institutions but only with regard to older or younger family members. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You will face a difference of opinion with someone with whom you have a monetary attachment. Before you get into trouble, assess the situation. Limitations and added burdens may be dropped in your lap. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Taking on an interesting proposal or project will help you stabilize your own financial situation. You can come up with solutions that will serve others well and help you in the interim. An educated move will allow you to invest wisely. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You may face additional expenses if you are too generous, especially with children and old folks. Before you offer something you cannot afford, consider what services you can use to benefit others. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Stay cool, calm and collected and concentrate on the things and people you enjoy. A creative endeavor will help you chill out and discover what it is you truly want to do with the rest of your life. It's never too late to change. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't let anyone restrict you or your plans. An issue at home may confuse you if you don't do your own fact-finding. Now is not the time to rely on anyone but yourself in an emotional situation. Anger will not pay off. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You need a little adventure in your life. Take time out to plan a trip or visit someone with whom you can share a little excitement. Idle time will be your enemy and can lead to a costly professional mistake. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't take on a battle that's not yours. You will only damage your reputation, leaving you in a vulnerable position. Contemplate a move that allows you to try something different and removes you from uncertain circumstances. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't hesitate to take on a task that includes institutions, corporations or government agencies. You can get the help you need and pave the way for a better future. Past experience will help you make the right decisions. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't get angry at the circumstances you face. Instead, use it to reinvent some of your talents and skills. You have more to offer than you think and can move forward in the right direction. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are reserved and private about your thoughts. You are careful about how you handle personal and financial matters. You lean toward unusual pastimes.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8	1	5	9	4			
	4		1			5		
3				6			4	
8				4			9	
9	5	4	6	8			1	
	3	7	2				8	
							7	
							3	
				7	2	6	5	9

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/06

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	9	5	2	1	4	8	6	3
1	4	6	5	3	8	7	9	2
8	3	2	9	7	6	1	4	5
4	6	1	8	5	3	2	7	9
9	5	7	1	4	2	3	8	6
3	2	8	7	6	9	4	5	1
2	1	9	4	8	5	6	3	7
5	8	3	6	2	7	9	1	4
6	7	4	3	9	1	5	2	8

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/05

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CAT BRUSHES **Solution: 5 letters**

C	R	G	E	D	G	T	E	S	S	E	R	A	C	L
C	O	A	R	S	E	N	E	P	M	S	L	O	O	T
N	T	M	L	O	A	S	I	N	A	E	D	O	M	T
O	A	H	B	L	O	B	I	D	D	H	S	L	F	R
I	C	I	T	I	E	M	I	G	D	E	S	S	O	O
T	I	D	R	E	N	R	I	P	N	A	R	T	R	H
O	L	E	L	A	E	A	G	N	E	L	P	I	T	S
M	P	P	A	C	N	(T)	T	I	G	T	S	F	E	M
F	P	P	T	O	I	(I)	P	I	E	H	T	F	L	A
P	A	I	E	A	K	(D)	R	L	O	S	O	I	T	L
I	O	T	M	T	S	(Y)	D	E	A	N	N	N	N	L
N	U	S	E	L	G	N	A	T	T	S	K	E	E	G
S	O	O	P	M	A	H	S	A	F	E	T	Y	G	N
T	O	U	C	H	A	I	R	A	K	E	V	I	R	O
R	Y	G	N	I	D	D	E	H	S	B	M	O	C	L

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Allergies, Applicator, Base, Caress, Coarse, Coat, Combination, Combs, Comfort, Design, Direction, Fine, Gentle, Grooming, Hair, Handle, Health, Hold, Knots, Long, Loosen, Mess, Metal, Motion, Padding, Petting, Pins, Plastic, Rake, Safety, Shampoo, Shape, Shedding, Short, Skin, Small, Stiff, Tangles, Teeth, Tender, Tidy, Tipped, Tools, Touch, Veterinarian

Yesterday's Answer: Appetizer

SALE: The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Uclick. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480.

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(NO PHONE CALLS, PLEASE)

Vacancy Announcement
Program Officer
Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities

The Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities (Council) is soliciting applications for the position of Program Officer. The Program Officer is responsible for developing and implementing a variety of humanities programs and events and coordinating the Council's Community Grants program under the supervision of the Council's executive director and board of directors. A detailed description of the Program Officer's duties may be obtained from the Council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai or from the Council's website at www.nmihumanities.org.

Applicants for this position must possess: (1). strong analytic, writing and communication skills; (2). knowledge of grants writing and grants administration; (3). the ability to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds; (4). a working knowledge of NMI history and of current political, social and economic issues confronting the local community; (5). basic computer skills including knowledge of MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint; and (6). the ability to articulate the Council's mission to a wide range of audiences.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) in a humanities discipline from an accredited postsecondary institution. The salary range is from $35,000 to $40,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Benefits are set forth in the NMICH Personnel Policy Manual.

Interested individuals are invited to send a letter of interest, a detailed résumé and the names and addresses of three references to Scott Russell, Executive Director, Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities, Box 506407, Saipan, MP 96950. Applications must be received by Council staff on or before 4:00 p.m. on Friday, 22 January 2010. Those wishing more information about this position may contact Council staff at 235-4785.

The Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities is an equal opportunity employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date:	Wednesday, January 6, 2010	Closing Date:	Until Filled		
JVA NO.	**Position Title**	**Positions**	**Salary**	**Contract**	**Location**
10-006	Deputy Director for Water Wastewater	[One Position]	Negotiable; Ungraded	Two-year	Water Wastewater, Saipan

Opening Date:	Wednesday, January 6, 2010	Closing Date:	Wednesday, January 20, 2010		
JVA NO.	**Position Title**	**Positions**	**Salary**	**Contract**	**Location**
10-007	Accounting Technician	[Four Positions]	$15,139 - $17,221	Two-year	Customer Serv., Billing, Credit & Coll., Saipan
10-008	Trades Assistant	[Two Positions]	$11,036 -12,692	Two-year	Water , Rota
10-009	Information Technology (IT) Analyst	[Two Positions]	$34,176 - $37,593	Two-year	IT, Saipan
10-010*	Information Technology (IT) Specialist	[One Position]	$19,425 - $21, 610	Two-year	IT, Saipan

* *This is a re-announcement of JVA 09-023. All applicants of 09-023 will be included in 10-010.*

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Wade, Beasley lift Heat over sliding Hawks

MIAMI (AP)— Whenever the Miami Heat appear to be slipping, they turn up the defense. No one has done that any better against Atlanta this season.

Dwyane Wade had 28 points and eight rebounds, Michael Beasley scored 20 of his 22 points in the first half and the Heat snapped a three-game skid by easily beating the sputtering Hawks 92-75 on Monday night.

''We're far from a perfect group,'' Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. ''But this group does have a spirit and they enjoy coming to work, and even though we went through a very tough stretch ... we've shown an ability to bounce back and have some resiliency, and it was a strong and important win.''

Miami held Atlanta to season lows in points (29.9 below its average) and field-goal percentage (35.2), plus held a dominant 52-30 edge in rebounding.

''Unacceptable, how we played tonight,'' Hawks coach Mike Woodson said.

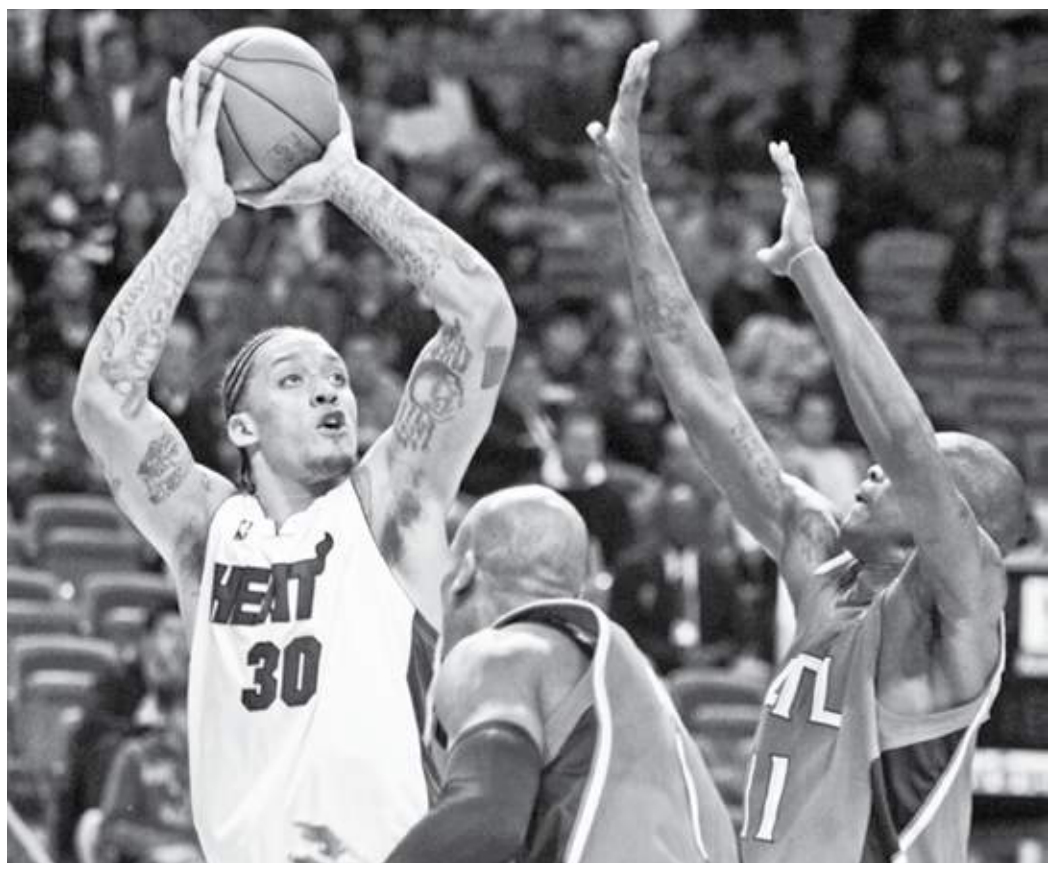
Udonis Haslem scored 12 points, while Quentin Richardson and Jamaal Magloire each added 10 rebounds for Miami, which moved within 3 1/2 games of Atlanta for the No. 4 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Jamal Crawford scored 23 points off the bench for the Hawks, who have lost four straight for the first time since January 7-13, 2009.

''If we would've put a little more effort in, it would have been a different story,'' point guard Mike Bibby said.

Joe Johnson scored 11 and was the only starter in double figures for Atlanta, which is 2-6 since Dec. 19 and 1-6 this season when scoring fewer than 96 points.

''It happens,'' Hawks center Al Horford said. ''That's the way the season is. There are highs and lows. Right now, this is our low.''



AP

Miami Heat forward Michael Beasley (30) goes up for a shot against Atlanta Hawks forward Maurice Evans, center, and guard Jamal Crawford, right, during the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday, Jan. 4, 2010, in Miami.

Atlanta has been Miami's nemesis in recent years, winning 11 of the last 16 meetings including postseason, plus knocking out the Heat in Game 7 of last year's Eastern Conference opening-round series.

Maybe it was those numbers, maybe it was the memory of wasting an early 19-point lead against Charlotte two nights earlier. Something clearly spurred on the Heat early.

''We just wanted to finish like professionals,'' Beasley said.

Miami made its final seven shots of the first quarter, fueling a 15-2 run that built a 30-14 lead, and the Heat were off and running. Beasley drove for an easy basket, unable to contain his smile as the Heat went up 44-21 midway through the second quarter, and the lead ballooned to as much as 25 before Atlanta outscored Miami 8-0 to make it 51-34 at intermission.

Even with that spurt, the opening two quarters were a debacle for the Hawks. Atlanta set a season low in first-half scoring (previously 41), got outrebounded 28-13 in the first 24 minutes, and really was only saved from a complete blowout by Crawford - who had 15 points by the break, while the rest of his teammates managed only 19 on 7 of 27 shooting.

''I thought we started this game off kind of like we did the Charlotte game, with a lot of energy early on, defensively making it tough on guys,'' Wade said. ''We kept playing consistent throughout the game. Even when they made a run, defensively we still had a lot of energy, we kept rebounding the ball and gave ourselves a chance.''

The Hawks settled in during the third quarter, getting 14 points from the starting backcourt of Johnson and Bibby after they combined for only four in the opening half. But Wade scored nine in the period to ensure the early Heat cushion stayed relatively intact, and Miami took a 73-58 lead into the fourth.

Thunder 98, Bulls 85

At Chicago, Russell Westbrook scored 29 points and Kevin Durant added 25 as Oklahoma City dominated the third quarter in a victory over Chicago.

Westbrook and Durant had eight points each during a 27-6 run in the third, when the Thunder shot 65 percent to take control. It was Oklahoma City's sixth victory in seven games.

Derrick Rose scored 19 points and Joakim Noah had 14 points and 14 rebounds for the Bulls, who were booed by their fans as they shot 22 percent in the decisive third period.

Hornets 91, Jazz 87

At Salt Lake City, Chris Paul stole the ball and drove for a layup with 27 seconds left to help New Orleans end a late threat for its first victory in Utah in almost four years.

Paul scored 10 of his 12 points in the second half and Devin Brown finished with a career-high 30 as the Hornets overcame 19 turnovers and ended a six-game losing streak at Utah.

Deron Williams had 17 points and 11 assists, giving him 3,003 assists for his career, and Carlos Boozer added 18 points and 14 rebounds for Utah, which lost its third straight.

Clippers 105, Trail Blazers 95

At Los Angeles, Chris Kaman scored 20 points and Eric Gordon added 19 as the Los Angeles Clippers pulled away in the fourth quarter.

Martell Webster scored a season-high 25 points, including five 3-pointers, Andre Miller had 22 points and 16 assists, and Juwan Howard added 16 points for Portland, which beat the Clippers 103-99 last week in Portland.

The Clippers led by four points going into the final 12 minutes. They opened with an 18-6 spurt, including six by Rasual Butler, to take their largest lead of the game, 95-80. The Blazers went nearly 4 minutes without a basket in that stretch.

Butler scored 11 of his 13 points in the period. Baron Davis had 15 points and nine assists for the Clippers.

NBA BRIEFS

Agent: Crittenton did nothing wrong in alleged gun dispute

WASHINGTON (AP)— An agent for the Washington Wizards' Javaris Crittenton is responding to reports of a locker room dispute by saying his client hasn't broken any laws. The *New York Post* has reported that Crittenton and Wizards star Gilbert Arenas drew guns on each other in a locker room dispute. Arenas has acknowledged bringing guns to the locker room in the past, but has declined to discuss specifics of the incident. Arenas is scheduled to meet with authorities about the matter on Monday. Crittenton's agent, Mark Bartelstein, said Monday he's confident that an investigation will show that "Javaris has done nothing wrong." He declined to go into detail about the incident in the team's locker room.

Heat's O'Neal misses game against Hawks

MIAMI (AP)—Heat center Jermaine O'Neal is out of the lineup against the Atlanta Hawks with a strained groin and hip flexor. It's the fourth time O'Neal has missed a game this season, although two of those were to attend a family funeral. Joel Anthony started Monday night in place of O'Neal, who has been bothered by soreness in the groin and hip for about two weeks. O'Neal is Miami's third-leading scorer at 12.7 points per game and second-leading rebounder at 6.9 per game. The Heat are hopeful O'Neal could return Wednesday when Miami hosts Boston.

Tests confirm Lakers' Gasol has strained hamstring

EL SEGUNDO, California (AP)—Los Angeles Lakers forward Pau Gasol of Spain has a mild to moderate strained left hamstring and is doubtful for Tuesday night's game against Houston. The Lakers said Monday that Gasol was examined by the team doctor and an ultrasound test and MRI showed the strain he sustained in Sunday night's win over the Dallas Mavericks. He started and played seven minutes before leaving the game. Gasol is listed as day-to-day. He missed the season's first 11 games with a strained right hamstring.

Arenas meets with authorities on guns in locker

WASHINGTON (AP)— Washington Wizards star Gilbert Arenas says he took unloaded guns from his locker in a "misguided effort to play a joke" on a teammate.

Arenas released a written statement Monday after meeting with law enforcement officials. And Arenas' lawyer says the player voluntarily met with prosecutors and detectives and answered every question during a two-hour interview.

In his statement, Arenas repeated his earlier assertion that he brought four guns to the Verizon Center to store in his locker in order to get them out of his house and away from his children. He said he mistakenly believed that recent changes in D.C. law made it legal for him to store unloaded guns there.

Arenas said he took the unloaded guns out of his locker on Dec. 21 "in a misguided effort to play a joke on a teammate." He denied threatening or assaulting anyone. The New York Post has reported that Arenas and teammate Javaris Crittenton drew guns on each other.

"Joke or not, I now recognize that what I did was a mistake and was wrong," Arenas said. "I should not have brought the guns to DC in the first place, and I now realize that there's no such thing as joking around when it comes to guns - even if unloaded."

Two officials within the league who have been briefed on the investigation told The Associated Press on Saturday that the incident stemmed from a dispute over card-playing gambling debts and a heated discussion in the locker room.

The other player involved is Javaris Crittenton. His agent, Mark Bartelstein, said earlier Monday that his client did nothing wrong.

It was unclear whether Crittenton also planned to meet with authorities about the incident. His lawyer, Peter White, is on vacation and said he would not be at any meetings Monday or Tuesday.

AP

Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas, center, goes to the basket between Sacramento Kings' Jason Thompson, left, Andres Nocioni, of Argentina, second from left and Tyreke Evans, right, during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif., Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2009

Arenas also apologized for his actions in the statement.

"I am very sorry for the effect that my serious lapse in judgment has had on my team, my teammates, the National Basketball Association and its fans," Arenas said. "I want to apologize to everybody for letting them down with my conduct, and I promise to do better in the future."

NBA commissioner David Stern likely will wait until the legal process is complete before handing down penalties, but he could rule on Arenas now since league rules were broken in that instance.

At the NBA's request, the firearms language was bolstered during collective bargaining in 2005. Players are subject to discipline if they bring guns to the arena or practice facility, or even an offsite promotional appearance.

Redskins meet with Shanahan after firing Zorn

ASHBURN, Va. (AP)—The Washington Redskins moved quickly in their pursuit of Mike Shanahan on Monday, flying in the former Denver Broncos coach on the same day the team fired Jim Zorn.

Shanahan and wife Peggy landed at Dulles International Airport near Redskins Park in mid-afternoon and were driven away in a limousine to meet with owner Dan Snyder and general manager Bruce Allen. Snyder planned for Shanahan to stay overnight at the owner's house in Maryland, and a formal hiring announcement could come as early as Tuesday.

Shanahan's arrival was the highlight of a long, eventful day as the Redskins sought a new direction after a 4-12 season. The first move came in the pre-dawn hours, when Zorn was dismissed during a meeting in his office with Allen after the team's cross-country flight following a 23-20 loss to the San Diego Chargers on Sunday.

"It's real clear that we're going to be aggressive," Allen said. "What we're looking for in a head coach is somebody who can lead these men that we had in our locker room this year to levels they've haven't played through before."

Shanahan won two Super Bowls in 14 seasons with the Broncos. He was fired a year ago after Denver missed the playoffs for the third straight season.

Shanahan would be expected to bring his son, Houston Texans offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan, with him to Washington. While the Redskins weren't making any announcements about a hiring, Texans coach Gary Kubiak spoke as if a Shanahan tandem in D.C. was virtually a foregone conclusion.

"Obviously it looks like Mike's coming right back in the business here real quick, and I know it's something he's always wanted, to work with his son," Kubiak said. "I'd be the same way."

Zorn went 12-20 over two seasons and lost 18 of his last 24 games after a 6-2 start in 2008. The Redskins struggled early this season despite a weak schedule and finished with their worst record since 1994.

"The status quo has to end," Allen said. "We have to change the way we've been doing some business. ... Last place two years in a row is not Redskins football."

Zorn's replacement will be Washington's seventh coach since Snyder bought the team in 1999. The Redskins are 82-99 on his watch, missing the playoffs in eight of 11 seasons.

"No one in the organization is satisfied with our record over the last two years," Snyder said in a statement released by the team, "and I am sure that Jim would concur with that statement. It has been painful for him, too. I certainly accept responsibility for mistakes that I have made."

Zorn's dismissal had been expected for months. The front office stripped him of his play-calling duties in late October, and Snyder interviewed assistant coach Jerry Gray for the job weeks ago, according to the Fritz Pollard Alliance, which monitors minority hiring in the NFL.

Neither Snyder nor Zorn was made available to reporters.

"Everybody's playing the waiting game now," running back Rock Cartwright said while he and his teammates cleaned out their lockers.

Shanahan made the playoffs in half of his 14 seasons in Denver, although he had only two losing seasons—6-10 in 1999 and 7-9 in 2007. His greatest successes came early, with back-to-back Super Bowl titles after the 1997 and 1998 seasons with running back Terrell Davis and quarterback John Elway.

His career regular-season record is 146-98, including 138-86 with the Broncos from 1995-2008 and 8-12 with the Los Angeles Raiders in 1988-89. Shanahan's playoff record is 8-5.

"I think it's safe to say we all need a guy who's done it before, who's been to the big games," cornerback DeAngelo Hall said. "It's kind of hard to envision yourself trying to get somewhere when the person who's talking to you has never been there personally. That's probably the only thing that I want. I want to go to the Super Bowl."

That's an indirect slap at Zorn, who often appeared overwhelmed and not fully in charge in two distraction-filled seasons. Zorn was a last-resort choice in 2008 after a monthlong search during which, for a variety of reasons, Snyder would up not hiring any of the names on the owner's original list. He had hired Zorn as an offensive coordinator, then promoted him to head coach two weeks later even though Zorn had never previously been a head coach or coordinator in the NFL.

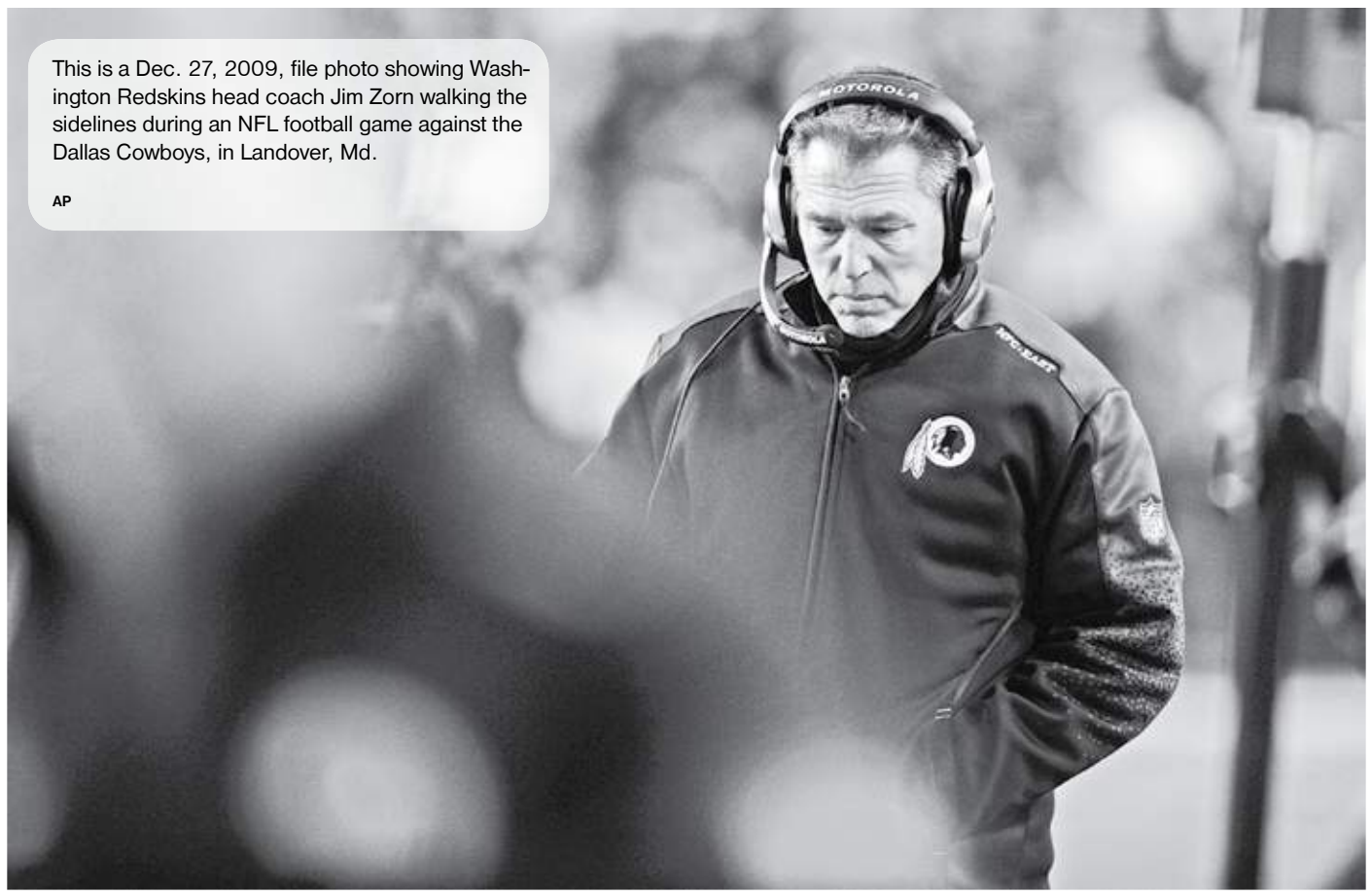
Zorn at first was charming and a bit corny, leading cheers of "Hip! Hip! Hooray!" in the locker room during the team's fast start. But his play-calling - supposedly his strength - and game management were often lacking, and the Redskins were under the 20-point mark in 20 of his 32 games. He also wasn't a strong leader, a trait some players abused by going over the coach's head.

"I think there's been a lack of communication, and I think that cost us a little bit," Cartwright said. "Guys feel like they could go to someone else instead of talking to coach Zorn. I just know that some guys had more say in some things than other guys."

It didn't help that the front office didn't give Zorn a solid roster. The offense line was aging and lacked quality depth. Jason Campbell was undermined by attempts to acquire other quarterbacks. Former first-round picks Carlos Rogers and LaRon Landry have been disappointments. Running back Clinton Portis looked worn down by years of wear and tear. Injuries to several key players compounded the problems, and 12 players finished the season on injured reserve.

The new coach, Snyder and Allen therefore have a monumental rebuilding task ahead of them. The Redskins will have the No. 4 overall pick in the draft, but the Redskins need more than one college stud to right the ship.

"Maybe some of our greatest improvements," Allen said, "is our players who are already on our roster playing better."



This is a Dec. 27, 2009, file photo showing Washington Redskins head coach Jim Zorn walking the sidelines during an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys, in Landover, Md.

AP

Teams looking ahead, coaches looking for work

By BARRY WILNER
AP FOOTBALL WRITER

Around the NFL, it is known as Black Monday, the day after the season ends, when coaches get fired.

Yet there are 12 teams thinking only about Super Sunday and how to get to the Super Bowl.

The playoffs begin next weekend with the wild-card round. Recent results indicate teams playing on the opening weekend of the postseason have a good chance of getting to the big game. It's happened the last four seasons, with three of those clubs winning the championship.

"We're in the same position as last year, where we had to win the last couple of games," Ravens running back Willis McGahee said Monday. "Once we get in there, we know we can do damage, and now we're in there."

Baltimore will be in New England on Sunday, followed by defending NFC champion Arizona hosting Green Bay in a rematch of the season finale, won 33-7 by the wild-card Packers.

On Saturday, the playoffs begin with two more repeats of Week 17 contests: the wild-card New York Jets at Cincinnati, followed by Philadelphia at NFC East winner Dallas.

Those eight teams are searching for that special spark that can carry them into February.

In Washington and Buffalo, it's coaching searches that have begun, although the Redskins probably won't be looking for long. Mike Shanahan is an overwhelming favorite to get the job Jim Zorn officially lost on Monday.

Perry Fewell and his entire Bills coaching staff were told to start looking elsewhere for employment, too.

The same could happen in Oakland, where Tom Cable guided the Raiders to a 5-11 record that some considered overachieving. He will meet with owner Al Davis next week—and no one can predict what Davis will do.

As for Eric Mangini in Cleveland, well, Mike Holmgren, recently hired to run the Browns, has not yet decided who will coach the team in 2010.

The damage on the coaching front won't be nearly as deep as last season, when 11 coaches who began 2008 did not make it into 2009. That doesn't mean it's any less painful for Zorn or Fewell.

Two of those coaching changes, with the Jets and Colts, worked out pretty well. Jim Caldwell, the designated successor when Tony Dungy retired, won his first 14 games before sparking endless debate by benching many starters in the second half against Rex Ryan's Jets.

Ryan's team took advantage, rallying to win in Indy, then routing the Bengals 37-0 on Sunday night to grab a playoff berth.

"Making the playoffs, it is special, there's no question about it," the outspoken, emotional Ryan said. "The way we did it, with the ups and downs we had during the season, it feels pretty good right now."

Feeling even better are Caldwell and his Colts, plus the Saints, Chargers and Vikings, all with byes. And perhaps the most intriguing aspect of wild-card weekend is the coaching angle.

Just like John Harbaugh in Baltimore and Mike Smith in Atlanta a year ago, rookie coach Ryan has guided his team into the postseason. He's joined by Harbaugh, whose Ravens went to the AFC title game last January, and such sideline heavyweights as Bill Belichick and Andy Reid.

In some ways, the more established coaches will be under the most pressure.

Belichick's Patriots have displayed unusual inconsistency and will be without the league's leading receiver, Wes Welker, injured in the final loss to Houston. New England already was in the playoffs, but Belichick chose to play his regulars for much of the game against the Texans, and Welker tore up his knee.

Reid's Eagles were among the NFL's hottest teams, surging from 5-4 to 11-4 and the top of the NFC East. Then they went flat at Dallas, lost 24-0, and showed so many holes it's difficult to fathom them plugging it all up in six days.

"You get back to business and you do it in a very matter-of-fact way," Reid said. "If you get caught up in all the what ifs and this and that, then you're making a mistake. We don't have time for that. It's a hurried-up week and you have to get right back on the horse and figure out how to not get bucked off again."

AP source: Red Sox and Beltre close to 1-year deal

A person familiar with the negotiations says free-agent third baseman Adrian Beltre and the Boston Red Sox are close to agreeing on a one-year contract.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday night because an agreement, which would be subject to a physical, had not been reached.

A home run threat known for strong defense, Beltre spent the past five years with Seattle. Injuries limited him to 111 games last season, when he batted .265 with eight homers and 44 RBIs.

Beltre is a two-time Gold Glove winner who turns 31 in April. He would supplant Mike Lowell at third base in Boston—the Red Sox tried to trade the 2007 World Series MVP to Texas last month but weren't able to finalize the swap. ***(AP)***

Boxing analyst says Pacquiao-Mayweather bout still possible

MANILA, Philippines—A healthy dose of hope has been injected into the Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather bout that has been weighed down by drug-testing issues, with Top Rank chief Bob Arum saying "something could be bubbling" and Mayweather promotions CEO Leonard Allerbe hopeful of giving "the biggest fight in history ... to the fans."

Boxing analyst Larry Merchant also chimed in his optimism, saying there is "too much money involved" for the fight not to push through, despite indications that both camps are far from a compromise.

In a report posted at Examiner.com, respected boxing journalist Michael Marley quoted a source within Team Mayweather that it was standing by its proposal to subject both fighters to stringent Olympic-style random drug-testing before the bout.

"There will be no Mayweather-Pacquiao fight unless they agree to random blood and urine testing with a mutually agreeable prefight cutoff date. End of story," said Marley's Team Mayweather source.

Citing various reasons, Pacquiao has refused the condition set by the Mayweather camp, apparently ruffled at the idea that he was being suspected as a drug cheat.

And the Filipino ring icon has even dismissed an option to have former United States presidential candidate Sen. John McCain, an ex-fighter and noted fight fan, mediate the dispute.

Still, Merchant told *USA Today* that he believes the fight will happen.

"There's so much money involved here," he said. "Even if irrationality triumphs over rationality, I think, eventually, the fight will get made. If they can't come to terms for a March fight, then I think it'll happen at some later date."

Arum had earlier told Marley that "something could be bubbling," but that Top Rank's "first priority, before any fight with anybody, is to clear Manny's name." ***(PDI)***

DCCA

From Page 28

While Docomo players were attending to Teregeyo, DCCA's Elias Rangamar huddled with his teammates and reiterated the need to slow down the game and remain cool after two technical fouls were slapped on them. The first was against Camacho, who protested a non-call in the paint and the second was on the bench for excessive complains against another non-call on Docomo's kicking violation.

Rangamar's teammates then responded to the challenge and DCCA managed to bring the lead back to double-digits, 54-44, on Camacho's four straight points.

The fourth canto started with DCCA ahead, 59-52, and Docomo repeatedly made comebacks, but fell short. Docomo could not get away with the 3-point deficit curse in the final period.

A 6-0 start in the payoff quarter moved Docomo with three, with more than eight minutes left in the game. Docomo had a chance to inch closer, as it went on a 3-on-1 fastbreak play, but Kae Bernardo fumbled and lost the ball to the baseline while going for an uncontested layup. That had been the story for Docomo as when it decided to step on the pedal, it either lost the leather or missed an easy shot.

Going into the last 2:36 of the fourth period, Docomo again tried to trim the 3-point deficit, but failed when Wowie Abuel, who was missing all night from outside, muffed a triple.

DCCA had seen enough and answered with an 11-0 run capped by Rangamar's triple to take a comfortable 80-66 lead, going into the last one minute of the title match.

Camacho top-scored for DCCA, eating up the defense of Docomo frontliners en route to a 33-point performance. Romeo Iginoef formed the other half of DCCA's small, but effective frontline, adding 16 markers. He got into foul trouble early, but managed to nurse his fouls to stay in the game and help DCCA to win. Rangamar chipped in 11. DCCA showed up for the finals with eight players and played only six with Tony Rogolifoi substituting for either Camacho or Iginoef.

Bernardo led Docomo's losing cause, notching 19 markers, but was held to only four points in the fourth. Kelvin Fitial contributed 18, but missed a lot of close range shots. Jun Estolas was scoreless in the fourth, but still finished with 13 markers.

DCCA 80 – P. Camacho 33, Iginoef 16, Rangamar 11, Rasa 11, Van Buren 9.

Docomo 70 – Bernardo 19, Fitial 18, Estolas 13, Villacrusis 8, Teregeyo 4, Abuel 2.

Scoring by quarters: 24-15, 41-27, 59-52, 80-70.

MINOR

From Page 28

Minor also joined the girls' 14-and-under doubles event played at the Shepparton Lawn Tennis Club and teamed up with Victoria Tollee. The duo was eliminated after losing to the pairs of Eloise and Emma Thompson, 0-6, 1-6, and Georgia Sim and Mila Storch, 3-8.

As of yesterday, Minor has earned a 3-3 slate in Shepparton, winning five sets and losing two in singles and dropping all three sets in doubles. She has won 37 games in singles and lost 26. In doubles, the Hopwood Junior High School student posted four games won against 20 defeats.

Besides the tournament in Shepparton, Minor has two more events left before returning to Melbourne as a spectator in the preliminary games in the 2010 Australian Open.

From Shepparton, Minor will go to Albury, New South Wales for the 2009 Post Margaret Court Cup, which will run from Jan. 7 to 12. After the event in New South Wales, Minor will return to Victoria for the 2010 Victorian Junior Grasscourt Championships that will take place in Wodonga from Jan. 13 to 17.

Minor left Saipan on Dec. 26 to join the ITF Pacific Oceania Touring Team in the Land Down Under. She is expected to return to the CNMI on Jan. 21 after watching games in the 2010 Australian Open for two days.

HOOPAHOLICS

From Page 28

the way with 16 points. Joseph Villacrusis and Mel Manibusan chipped in 15 apiece and John Sablan and Syl Teregeyo added 12 and 10 points, respectively. Dave Palacios and Gyles Ruluked contributed eight each.

Villacrusis canned two early triples and finished the first quarter with 11 points to give Hoopaholics a 25-13 advantage. Hoopaholics hung in there, as Villacrusis' teammates stepped up in the remaining three quarters.

Teregeyo made eight of his total points in the second period and Dave Palacios drilled two triples to keep Hoopaholics in the lead at the break, 45-39.

Prospects made a run in the third quarter behind Bonbon Cadagat and Ryan Sanciangco, but Mendiola, Manibusan, and Ruluked were there to save the day for Hoopaholics. Mendiola scored Hoopaholics last seven points, while Ruluked and Manibusan added four each, putting their team ahead by a deuce, 63-61 going into the final canto.

It was Sablan's turn to keep Hoopaholics' afloat in the fourth, making two triples and scoring 10 markers in the early goings of the final period. The backcourt duo of Villacrusis and Dave Palacios put the finishing touches on Hoopaholics' win with the former scoring five straight points and the latter drilling two charities.

Ol'Aces 87, Trinity Estate 33

After their four-game winning run was snapped last week, Ol'Aces vented their ire on Trinity Estate, posting an 87-33 rout in the second game of the night.

Trinity's output is the lowest so far in the eight-team league, leaving the squad winless in six games.

Ol'Aces improved to a 5-1 record after losing to Advance X-Terminators on Dec. 29, thrashing Trinity despite the absence of four players. Veterans Peter Camacho, Romeo Iginoef, Elias Rangamar, and Gabriel White missed the game against Trinity, as the first three players suited up for DCCA in the government/business caging, while White was at the game's officials table.

Young guns Pete Iguel, Jack Lizama, Mike Olaitiman, and Dan Barcinas took the cudgels for Ol'Aces, combining for 56 points. Ed Diaz showed up, too, and added 12 markers to help Ol'Aces ease past Trinity.

First Game

Hoopaholics 87 – Mendiola 16, Jo. Villacrusis 15, Manibusan 15, J. Sablan 12, Teregeyo 10, G. Ruluked 8, D. Palacios 8, G. Palacios 2.

Prospects 81 – Cadagat 29, Sanciangco 17, Peredo 11, Moises 6, Aughenbaugh 4, Johnson 3, Lauron 3, Inos 2, Pagarao 1.

Scoring by quarters: 25-13, 45-39, 63-61, 87-81.

Second Game

Ol'Aces 87 – Iguel 16, Lizama 15, Olaitiman 13, Diaz 12, Barcinas 12, Omar 8, Tumaquip 7.

Trinity 33 – Fernandez 12, Herrera 6, Dulfo 4, Guevarra 4, A. Loste 3, J. Loste 2.

Scoring by quarters: 22-10, 47-19, 74-22, 87-33.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	24	8	.750	–
Toronto	17	18	.486	8 1/2
New York	14	20	.412	11
Philadelphia	10	23	.303	14 1/2
New Jersey	3	30	.091	21 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	24	9	.727	–
Atlanta	21	12	.636	3
Miami	17	15	.531	6 1/2
Charlotte	14	18	.438	9 1/2
Washington	10	21	.323	13

Central Division

Cleveland	27	9	.750	–
Chicago	14	18	.438	11
Milwaukee	13	18	.419	11 1/2
Detroit	11	21	.344	14
Indiana	10	23	.303	15 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	23	11	.676	–
San Antonio	20	12	.625	2
Houston	20	14	.588	3
Memphis	16	16	.500	6
New Orleans	16	16	.500	6

Northwest Division

Denver	21	13	.618	–
Portland	22	14	.611	–
Oklahoma City	19	15	.559	2
Utah	18	16	.529	3
Minnesota	7	28	.200	14 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	27	6	.818	–
Phoenix	21	13	.618	6 1/2
L.A. Clippers	15	18	.455	12
Sacramento	14	19	.424	13
Golden State	9	23	.281	17 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Miami 92, Atlanta 75
Oklahoma City 98, Chicago 85
New Orleans 91, Utah 87
L.A. Clippers 105, Portland 95

NBA LEADERS

SCORING

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Bryant, LAL	33	368	220	995	30.2
Anthony, DEN	32	331	272	961	30.0
James, CLE	36	363	253	1039	28.9
Durant, OKC	33	321	256	942	28.5
Wade, MIA	31	281	227	817	26.4
Ellis, GOL	32	326	152	821	25.7
Nowitzki, DAL	33	295	209	823	24.9
Bosh, TOR	35	290	245	831	23.7
Roy, POR	34	282	181	793	23.3
Arenas, WAS	31	247	147	703	22.7
Johnson, ATL	32	272	102	699	21.8
Gay, MEM	30	236	129	624	20.8
Stoudemire, PHX	34	268	168	704	20.7
Kaman, LAC	32	273	105	651	20.3
Randolph, MEM	32	262	118	645	20.2
Evans, SAC	29	218	132	583	20.1
Duncan, SAN	30	240	121	601	20.0
Williams, UTA	31	222	127	608	19.6
Boozer, UTA	33	255	127	637	19.3
Jennings, MIL	31	219	99	598	19.3

FG PERCENTAGE

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	153	238	.643
Gasol, MEM	184	297	.620
Howard, ORL	182	297	.613
Horford, ATL	188	317	.593
Hilario, DEN	183	315	.581
Lee, NYK	264	461	.573
Stoudemire, PHX	268	469	.571
Landry, HOU	198	349	.567
Bynum, LAL	185	328	.564
Millsap, UTA	140	249	.562

REBOUNDS

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	33	121	317	438	13.3
Noah, CHI	31	123	256	379	12.2
Wallace, CHA	31	68	302	370	11.9
Camby, LAC	31	88	266	354	11.4
Randolph, MEM	32	150	215	365	11.4
Bosh, TOR	35	114	282	396	11.3
Lee, NYK	34	80	294	374	11.0
Boozer, UTA	33	67	280	347	10.5
Haywood, WAS	31	127	192	319	10.3
Duncan, SAN	30	88	218	306	10.2

ASSISTS

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	34	381	11.2
Paul, NOR	23	242	10.5
Williams, UTA	31	301	9.7
Rondo, BOS	31	298	9.6
Kidd, DAL	34	301	8.9
B. Davis, LAC	32	250	7.8
James, CLE	36	279	7.8
Westbrook, OKC	33	241	7.3
Arenas, WAS	31	215	6.9
Duhon, NYK	34	220	6.5

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

UBA STANDINGS

Advance	5	0
Ol'Aces	5	1
Noni Saipan	3	2
Prospects	3	3
Hoopaholics	3	3
Diamond	2	3
Cholos	1	4
Trinity	0	6

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Island Rebels	5	0
Natibu	4	0
SaiPal	4	0
Man Amigos	5	1
San Roque	3	1
Chura	3	1
Freedom Air Flyers	3	2
6-Pack	3	2
Hitz	3	2
Blazers	2	2
Ur Balls	2	2
Berdax	1	2
Red Eye	2	3
G-Ballers	2	4
Calikano-Falcons	1	3
Team Familia	1	3
Lancheros	1	3
Team Fuegu	1	4
Ramblers	1	4
X-Terminators	0	4
Go For Broke	1	5

MAN AMIGOS

From Page 28

in the second and scored two runs. Centerfielder Julian Camacho, third baseman Manny Sablan, and extra hitter Melvin Tenorio added three RBIs each. Sablan was only 1-for-3 at the plate, but hit a three-run homer in the first inning. Tenorio also homered in the fourth inning and was perfect at bat with his 3-for-3. Camacho went 3-for-4 and scored three runs, one double, and one triple.

Go For Broke made all its runs in the second inning, but still fell behind, 9-5, after two complete innings. Man Amigos added four more runs in the fourth after being shut out in the third and saved the best for last, drilling eight runs in the fifth inning en route to an easy win.

Hitz 14, Blazers 4

Hitz snapped Blazers' two-game winning run with a 14-7 victory.

Hitz leaned on its good start to gain its third win in five games. The Blazers dropped to an even 2-2 card.

Hitz had a six-run top of the first, behind Kyle Kaipat's two-run homer and Ken Kaipat's two-run double. Kyle Kaipat blasted another two-run homer in the second inning and Hitz went on to take an 8-0 lead after two completing innings.

The Blazers broke the spell in the third with Justin Sablan's single driving home Pat Blas. However, Hitz shut out the Blazers, anew in the fourth and the latter scored only four runs in the fifth inning, failing to extend the game.

Kyle Kaipat finished the game perfect at the plate with his 3-for-3. Ken Kaipat went 2-for-2, while Jun Kaipat was 3-for-3 and added one RBI.

G-Ballers 14, Red Eye 7

After losing their first two games, the G-Ballers are on a streak, following 14-7 victory over Red Eye.

G-Ballers, who gained their first win against Go For Broke, 15-5, on Saturday, made it two in a row after drawing a grandslam from Jun Salalila. The G-Ballers leftfielder went 3-for-4 at bat, making his grandslam in the first inning. Shortstop Rey Terlaje was only 2-for-4 at the plate, but contributed three RBIs, nailing a three-run homer in the fifth inning. Centerfielder Rusty Santos was spotless at bat, going 2-for-2 and scoring two runs and two RBIs.

2009 Youth Christmas Hoop Fest Awards

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Members of Mixed Plate pose with their championship trophy after ruling the girls' 18-and-under division of the 2009 Annual Youth Christmas Hoop Fest on Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Southern Sonics got their second runner-up trophy after bowing to Rollers A in the boys' 18-and-under finals.

Players of boys' 14-and-under champion Rollers A are all smiles as they make it to the medal podium.

Hopwood Girls and their coaches/teachers pose with the championship trophy in the girls' 14-and-under division.

Rollers A's Stacy Macaranas was named MVP in the boys' 14-and-under age group.

Girls' 14-and-under MVP Geraldine Castillo of Hopwood Girls shows her medals and trophy.

From left, MHS' Lena Guzman, Mixed Plate's Roxanne Duenas, and MHS' Lalaine Pagarao, made it to the "Fantastic Five" in the girls'18-and-under age group. Not in the photo were Mixed Plate's Nicole Lebria and MHS' Glorily Williams.

MHS coach Jose Tumaquip, seated left, joins the girls' 18-and-under runners-up Lady Dolphins.

RBC Badu head coach Joe Diaz and some members of the team receive the championship trophy in the boys' 11-and-under age group.

Coach Jesse Tudela, right, and his Lil' Sonics settled for a runner-up finish after losing to Rollers A in the boys' 14-and-under finals.

Wade, Beasley lift Heat over sliding Hawks

Whenever the Miami Heat appear to be slipping, they turn up the defense. No one has done that any better against Atlanta this season. **24**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Redskins meet with Shanahan after firing Zorn

The Washington Redskins moved quickly in their pursuit of Mike Shanahan on Monday, flying in the former Denver Broncos coach on the same day the team fired Jim Zorn. **25**

DCCA rules govt/business caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Department and Community and Cultural Affairs took home the championship of the 2009 IT&E Inter Government/Business Basketball League early, after outclassing NTT Docomo, 80-70, on Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

DCCA had a twice-to-beat advantage against Docomo in the title duel, but wasted no time in clinching the championship, as the former played its cards wisely.

Up against a faster and younger Docomo crew, the depleted DCCA slowed the game down. Docomo bit into the bait and was forced to play catch up since the first period, when DCCA led by nine, 24-15. Peter Camacho scored DCCA's last six points, as he benefited the most in the team's halfcourt set, getting baskets in the paint.

Docomo continued to struggle against DCCA' slow tempo in the second quarter, allowing the eventual champion to take a 41-27 halftime lead. Again, DCCA's slowdown game worked on Camacho's favor, as he scored 11 more points on either underneath baskets or short jumpers in the paint.

At the start of the second half, Docomo finally realized it had to run or let DCCA methodically take the crown. A 10-2 spurt at the beginning of the third quarter brought Docomo back into the game, but a bad fall from Syl Teregeyo halted the rally.

Teregeyo was going for a fastbreak layup when he was bumped and fouled by Ponce Rasa. Teregeyo made the basket, but failed to get up following the shot after spraining his right foot. Teregeyo never returned to the game.

See DCCA on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

DCCA players flash the No. 2 sign after clinching their second title in the government caging, following an 80-70 win over NTT Docomo on Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

J.J. Laniyo, which plays for Man Amigos, hit a solo homer in the team's 21-5 demolition of Go For Broke in the Chamolinian league on Monday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Man Amigos crush Go For Broke

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Man Amigos posted the most lopsided win in Monday night's triple-treat from Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League, clobbering Go For Broke, 21-5, at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Man Amigos allowed Go For Broke to score only in one inning, giving the former their fifth win in six games. Go For Broke absorbed its fifth loss in six matches and dropped further to the team standings.

Shortstop Peter Sablan went only 2-for-4 at bat, but recorded four RBIs. He had a two-run homer

See MAN AMIGOS on Page 26

Minor on a roll in Australia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI junior tennis player Thea Minor won three of her first four singles game in the 2010 Ducats GV Championships in Shepparton, Victoria, Australia.

Minor debuted with a loss to Australia's Daphne Mantzanidis in the girls' 14-and-under singles on Saturday, 2-6, 3-6, but went on to sweep her next three matches to make it to the quarterfinals of the consolation draw.

The 14-year-old CNMI bet faced Emma Thompson next and nailed a straight sets win, 6-2, 6-1. Another straight set victory against Caitlyn Illangasinghe, 6-1, 6-2, moved Minor to a Round of 16 showdown against Celine Bodera.

Bodera was seeded sixth in the main draw and Minor pulled off an 8-7 upset over the Aussie to advance to the quarterfinals. The CNMI junior netter was scheduled to duel Pacific Oceania teammate Lorish Puluspene of Papua New Guinea in the quarterfinal round yesterday, but results of the match were unavailable at press time.

See MINOR on Page 26

Hoopaholics streak to third win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Hoopaholics are on a roll, cruising to their third straight win after pulling off an 87-81 upset over Prospects in the 2009 UBA/Miller Lite Men's Basketball League on Monday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Hoopaholics had a 0-3 start in the league to fall behind in the team standings, but are now at the top half of the field after their six-point win over Prospects.

A balanced offense helped Hoopaholics stun Prospects, which was in a tie for third place with Noni Saipan before losing its sixth game. Five players scored in double figures for Hoopaholics with Peter Mendiola leading

See HOOPAHOLICS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Mel Manibusan, left, and Jack Lizama, seen here in a loose ball action, play for Hoopaholics and New Fresh Ol'Aces, who topped separate rivals in the UBA caging on Monday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.